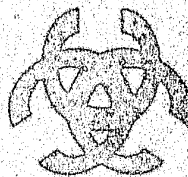


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VIOLENT JUVENILE OFFENDER PROGRAM
PART II

PRINCIPLES OF
ACTION PLANNING

JUVENILE JUSTICE PROJECT
CENTER FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE



SEPTEMBER 1983

PRINCIPLES OF ACTION PLANNING

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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In the spirit of teaching and learning, we wish you success in your efforts to enable residents to develop plans for reducing violent delinquency within your neighborhood.

Bonnie S. Wood
Deborah E. Brouse

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Introduction

As you implement the Violent Juvenile Offender Program, Part II (VJOP/II) in your neighborhood, an important part of the implementation is the development of an Action Plan. The purpose of this document is to illustrate the value of the Action Planning process and to offer some guidance in developing the plan.

To best understand the concept of an Action Plan as an integral part of the program design of VJOP/II, it is first necessary to understand the importance of planning in general for neighborhood-based organizations. Therefore, the first section of this document will address basic principles of planning that are applicable to everything that an organization attempts to do. This section will present a general planning framework along with a definition and example of each element of the plan.

The next section will address the development of an Action Plan as a specific component of VJOP, II. This section will demonstrate the application of the planning framework to this program and will illustrate each element of the plan with an example.

The third section of this document will focus on the process of developing an Action Plan. This section will address the involvement of the Resident Mobilization Council and other neighborhood residents in this process.

The final section will address the issue of effectively using the Action Plan.

It is hoped that this document will prove useful to you and residents of your neighborhood as you undertake planning for this program and for other efforts to create positive change within your neighborhood.

PRINCIPLES OF PLANNING

Establishing and using a planning process in a neighborhood-based organization is an attempt to exert control over the direction of the organization from within. Crisis management can lead away from the values and purposes of the organization, while the use of planning techniques focuses attention on these aspects of the organization. This does not imply that planning occurs in a vacuum; rather it involves setting the direction of the organization through thoughtful responses to new information and new circumstances.

The need for planning is even more important when there is an attempt to create change within a neighborhood in a way that demands the active involvement of residents. Within the VJOP/II, planning furthers the process of resident mobilization by providing a mechanism for residents to begin to exert some control over what happens in their neighborhood.

Whether the focus is on the internal management of an organization or the attempt to impact a major social problem such as juvenile crime, the need to plan for action is critical. Whether planning is being conducted by a large neighborhood group as they attempt to tackle a neighborhood-wide problem or by an individual attempting to break down a large scope of work into day-to-day activities, the mechanics of planning are the same. Contrary to a common misconception, planning need not be complicated or cumbersome. Understanding what planning is and becoming adept at applying several basic planning steps is essentially all that is needed to make the planning process work. It does take time to plan, but then it often costs time when planning is not done.

What is planning?

Planning is nothing more than a process for determining:

- where you are
- where you want to be
- how you are going to get there
- how you will know when you have arrived.

If you undertake a planning process and afterward cannot fully answer each of these questions, implementing your plan may

be extraordinarily difficult, cost you time and resources and not yield the results you are after.

Remember, a plan is only a tool to assist you in creating an effective program or managing the effort. Having a well - written, detailed plan on paper produces little benefit if there is not widespread participation in its implementation. It is important to simplify the planning process, clarify who is to be involved in the development of the plan, and make sure that everyone accepts its important and necessity.

Steps in the Planning Process

The following steps are outlined as a way of illustrating the nature and the intent of planning as a sequential process for understanding and resolving problems.

1. Identify the current condition that concerns you.
 - In general terms, identify the major problem or need that you want to address.

2. Identify the ideal condition that you would like to see exist.
 - In the previous step, you identified the real situation that currently exists. Before you can adequately address the situation, you must have a vision of what you would ultimately like to see, something that you want to work toward.
 - This step will require an examination of the values of the individuals engaged in the planning effort. Consensus must be reached about what aspects of the real situation are unacceptable/intolerable, and what changes are most important to achieve. This will ensure that there is a common focus to guide the planning effort and, ultimately, the implementation of the plan.
 - This step should produce a description of what the ideal condition would be.
 - Associated with the description of the ideal condition is the statement of overall purpose or mission of the plan. The mission states in general terms what you ultimately would like to accomplish.

3. Undertake an analysis of the problem and develop a specific plan for action.
 - This step first requires you to collect and analyze data on the major problem you have identified and the resources available to you to address the problem.
 - Next, this step requires you to become more specific in determining what you want to achieve and how you will achieve it, based upon your analysis of the problem. It is the step of translating your overall mission into concrete statements of intent and determining how these will be achieved within specific time frames.

- This step should yield a plan which describes goals, objectives (strategies), activities, tasks, time frames, roles and responsibilities, required resources, and elements of monitoring/evaluation. All of these elements are necessary to guide an effective effort to narrow the gap between the real and the ideal conditions.

4. Implement and monitor the plan.

- Implementation requires mobilizing and/or securing the resources needed to carry out the plan.

- As the plan is implemented, its progress must be continually monitored. Adjustments can then be made as necessary.

(Note: Determining data needed for monitoring and establishing a mechanism for regularly collecting/reviewing them is a part of step 3; this must be done prior to implementation).

5. Evaluate the impact of implementation.

- After a sufficient implementation period (determined in step 3 by the nature of the goals and objectives), implementation of the plan should be reviewed to determine exactly what impact the strategies have had on the specific problems identified. The specific problems and the overall problem should be reassessed to determine whether any changes have occurred and to determine if the observed changes can be attributed to your efforts.

(Note: Determining data needed for evaluating the effort and establishing a mechanism to collect/analyze them is a part of step 3; this must be done prior to implementation).

6. Replan

- Using the evaluation data, a determination should be made as to whether there is a need to change priorities, adjust or expand your efforts. Based on this determination a revised plan should be developed.

- The revised plan is then implemented, its progress continually monitored and adjustments made as necessary.

- After a sufficient length of time for implementation, the new plan is evaluated and the cycle continues.

As presented above, it is clear that the first three steps in the planning process relate to determining where you are and where you want to be, while steps 3 and 4 help you to establish how you will get there. Step 5 is necessary to determine whether in fact you have arrived at your destination. The final step illustrates that the planning process is cyclical and ongoing. These steps work well for a group of people who want to undertake a complete program to attack a large problem (such as juvenile crime), a group who is adding a new component to a currently existing program, or a group of people or an individual who want to plan for a single event or type of activity (such as a staff meeting or training session).

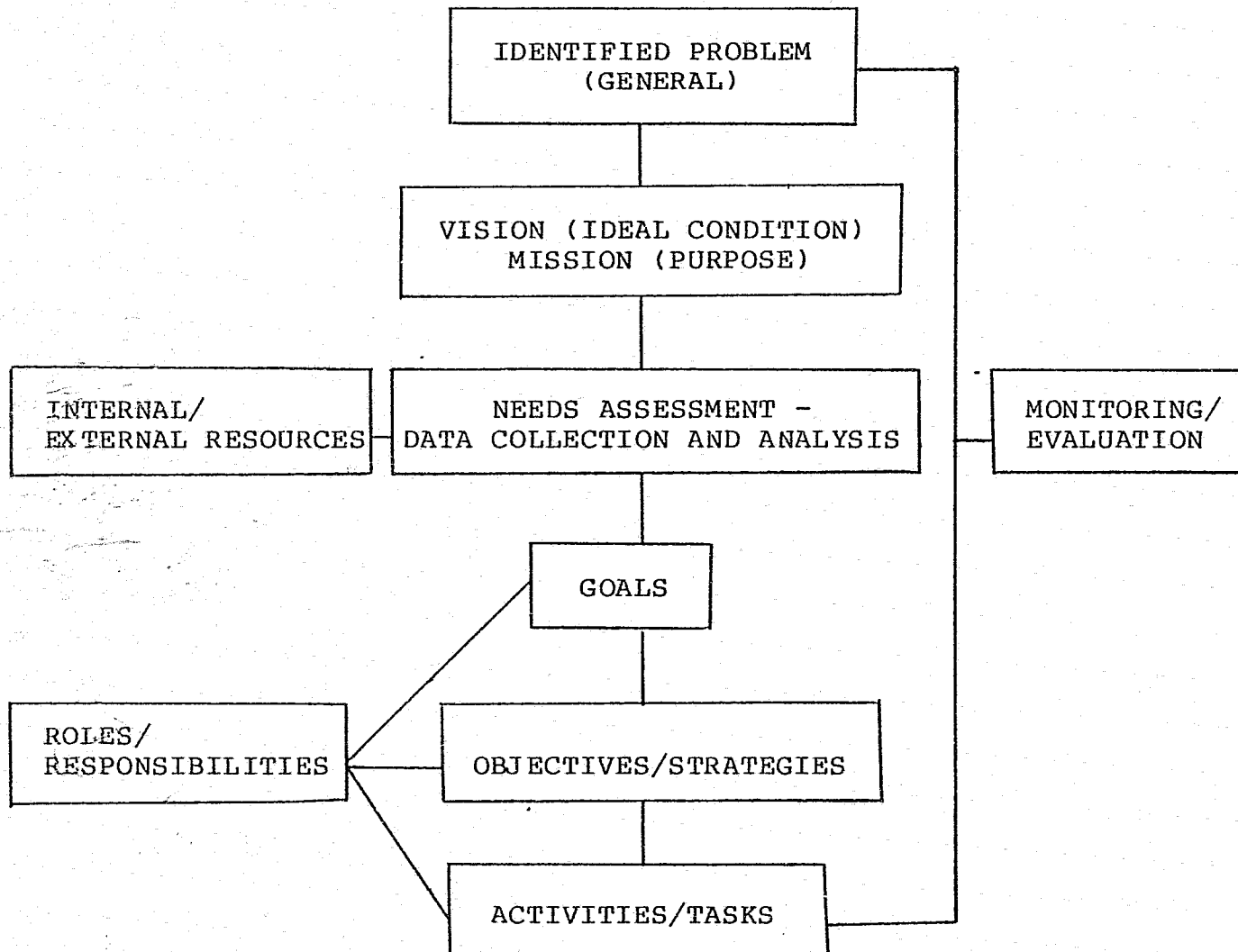
The application of these steps can enhance the ability of planners to successfully integrate seemingly varied activities and eliminate activities that do not contribute toward the achievement of an overall purpose. Most importantly, the application of the planning steps can enhance the effectiveness of everyone involved in the implementation of the plan by clearly demonstrating how all activities fit together and address the problems that have been identified.

Developing the Plan

The steps in the planning process can be summarized by the chart on the following page. This planning framework illustrates the key elements of a plan and indicates the relationships between them.

The planning framework should serve as a guide for the development of a plan. It demonstrates the one most important characteristic of a well-developed plan: the progression from general statements of what exists and what needs to be done to specific statements of what will be done and how and when it will be done during the proposed implementation period. To facilitate your application of this framework, definitions and descriptions of each element follow the chart. In addition, an example is provided which illustrates the use of the framework to address a need that has been identified by some of the neighborhood-based organizations participating in the VJOP/II.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK



Elements of the Planning Framework

Overall Problem or Need (Current Condition)

The overall problem is a general statement of what is wrong. It is a statement of the condition that you want to change in some way. It serves as the impetus for undertaking some action.

Example: Within our organization there is a lack of resident involvement in identifying their needs and planning and implementing activities to meet those needs.

Vision (Ideal Condition) and Mission (Purpose)

A vision statement is a broad, descriptive statement of what the planners would like to see exist, ideally. The vision is something that cannot be achieved in a short period of time, but rather an overall dream that serves to guide all activities.

Example: We would like to see all residents of this neighborhood actively participating in the identification of neighborhood problems and needs and working cooperatively with each other to address those problems and needs.

A mission or purpose states in general terms what you intend to do. Since it is only the first step in translating the vision statement into a statement of action, it is a broad statement of direction. A mission statement is not time-limited; rather it should serve for an extended period of time to provide focus for planning various activities.

Example: Our mission is to enable and encourage all residents of this neighborhood to actively participate in the identification of neighborhood problems and needs and to work cooperatively with each other to address those problems and needs.

Needs Assessment - Data Collection and Analysis

Information regarding the nature and the extent of the general problem must be collected and then analyzed to determine specific aspects of the problem that can be addressed. This involves the application of assessment techniques that are appropriate for the identified problem (reviews of records, surveys, interviews, meetings). The needs assessment process need not be complicated, but it must be well-planned to ensure that appropriate and adequate information is gathered.

Example: In an attempt to understand the problem of a lack of resident participation, the following data-collection activities will be undertaken:

- A survey of residents who have received services through this organization; interviews with former and present volunteers and staff. Respondents will be asked to indicate their perceptions of this organization, the extent of their involvement in determining/addressing neighborhood needs, and their attitudes toward resident involvement in these activities.
- A survey of other neighborhood residents, asking for the same information.
- Interviews with representatives of several neighborhood organizations that attempt to involve residents in various activities. These individuals will be asked about the level of resident participation in planning and implementing activities.

Once the appropriate data are collected, they must be reviewed in an attempt to redefine the problem to state specifically what needs to be addressed. Most likely this will yield a number of specific problem statements. Priorities should then be established among the specific problems identified.

Example: From the analysis of the survey and interview data, we identified several specific problems. The following statements are three of these problems which we thought we could initially address.

1. Many residents who have attempted to become involved in organizational initiatives have dropped out because they felt they were not given an opportunity to participate in decision-making.
2. Many residents who responded to the survey thought that they did not have the ability to bring about change in the conditions of the neighborhood.
3. Some residents responding to the survey thought that identifying and addressing needs of the neighborhood was not their responsibility.

A final note about the needs assessment process: Once specific problem statements are identified, your analysis to this point should be reviewed. Ask the question: "If we successfully address the specific problems derived from our analysis, will we

have an impact on the larger problem originally identified?" If the link between the general, overall problem and the specific problems cannot be readily identified, further analysis needs to take place.

Goals

Goals are statements of intended results or outcomes, not statements of activity. Developing goal statements is the first step in translating your vision/mission into what realistically can be accomplished within a given time frame. Answering the question, "What should happen as a result of our intervention in this (problematic) situation?," will form the basis of a goal statement.

The overall mission is developed in response to the general problem and reflects the values embodied in the vision statement. Goals are developed in response to the specific aspects of the problem that were identified during the needs assessment and will also reflect the vision statement. The achievement of several goals should move you closer to the achievement of the mission.

A goal is structured to indicate the desired change in the current situation; it is a statement of an intent to bring about this change. Therefore, goals usually begin with phrases such as "to increase", "to reduce", "to expand".

There are three levels of goals that can be used to assist you in thinking through a situation and the desired outcomes:

- Ultimate goal - usually a long-range anticipated result which is the cumulative result of many activities. It is only slightly more specific and time-focused than a mission statement, but must be achievable during the proposed implementation period.
- Intermediate goal - more short-range in nature and implies that the identified problem will not be fully addressed by this goal.
- Immediate goal - the outcome that can be achieved early through your efforts. This type of goal is much more specific and implies a more limited impact upon the problem being addressed.

You will not find the need to use all three levels of goals every time you develop a plan; this will be determined by the nature of the specific problems being addressed and the period of time you are planning for. Ultimate and intermediate goals are often most useful in the development of long-range plans or when

there is the need to indicate overall desired impact on a set of specific problems.

Example: For a six-month plan, given the problem statements which emerged from the needs assessment process and the mission stated earlier, the goals are:

Ultimate goal (the intended result of collectively addressing the problem statements): To increase resident participation in identifying and addressing neighborhood needs.

Immediate goals (the intended results of addressing each problem statement individually. Achievement of these goals should lead to the achievement of the ultimate goal):

- To expand the opportunities available for residents to make decisions regarding the activities that will be carried out in the neighborhood.
- To increase residents' abilities to identify and address neighborhood needs.
- To increase residents' awareness of the benefits of their involvement in identifying and addressing neighborhood needs.

Objectives/Strategies

Objectives are specific statements of what will be done to accomplish the goals (bring about the desired results). All objectives must be time-framed and measurable, to the extent that they state explicitly and without confusion what will be done and when. When structuring objectives, avoid broad terms such as "to provide" and "to furnish" and focus instead on specific actions, such as "to conduct three meetings."

The objective-setting step of planning requires the planners to select a particular approach for addressing the identified problems. For any problem, there are a variety of approaches which can be used to address it. However, not all of these methods will be consistent with the values and visions of the planners, will lead to the accomplishment of the stated mission and goals and will be feasible given the resources available. As planners consider what can be done to accomplish the goals, this type of review of previous steps is important; only then can objectives be developed.

In developing a plan, there may be several objectives that relate to each goal. These relationships must be clear and

reflect your understanding of the problem you are addressing. Based on your analysis, you should be able to positively answer the question, "If we carry out these objectives, will we then achieve this goals?" If you cannot answer this question, review your analysis of the problem and your selection of an approach to address it.

Example: Given our stated goals, it is obvious that we must undertake actions that will engage residents in actively exerting control over what will be done in their neighborhood. Other approaches to increasing resident involvement have focused on assigning residents responsibility for implementation of various activities. Our immediate goals would not be accomplished through such an approach because we have stated an intention for residents to take on decision-making and planning responsibilities. Further, we are concerned with developing the capacity of residents to plan and implement programs which improve the neighborhood. Given these basic values and our understanding of the problem, our objectives are:

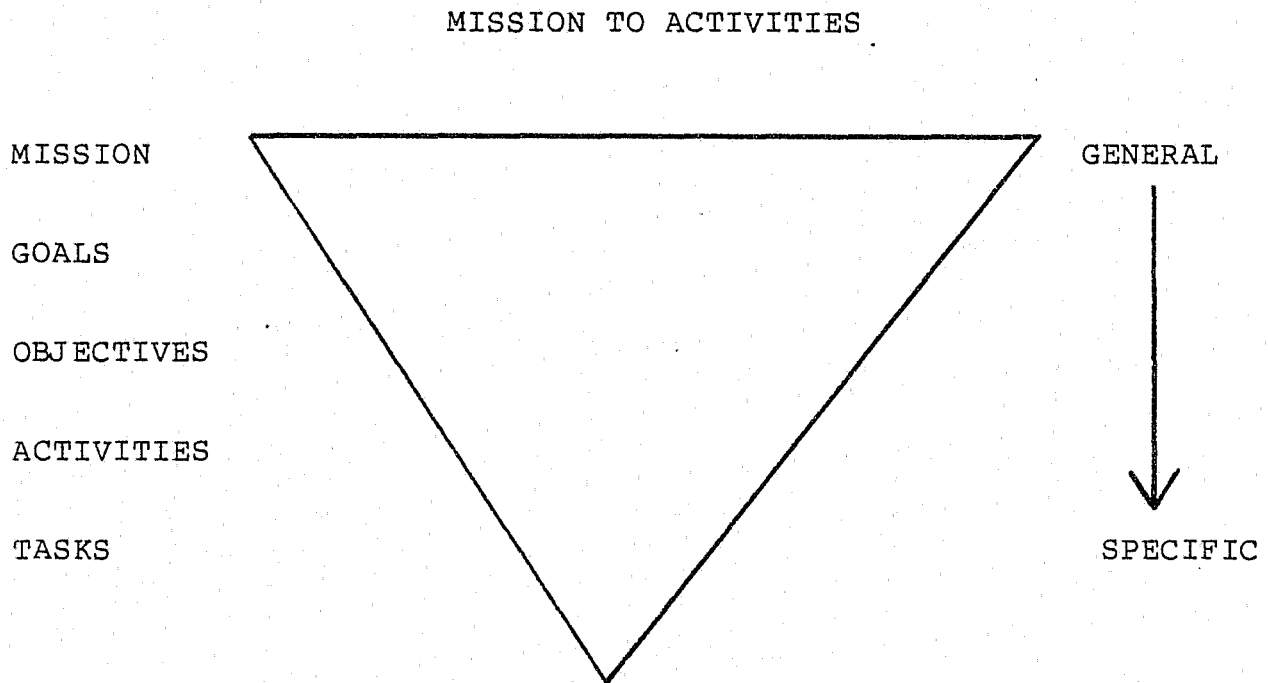
- Within the first two months, recruit 15-20 neighborhood leaders to work together to assess and address a major problem in the neighborhood. (The major problem has been identified as something this organization wanted to do something about.)
- During month three, conduct three training sessions for the neighborhood leaders, designed to enhance their planning skills.
- During month four, assist the group of leaders in developing a plan for involving other residents in analyzing and addressing the identified problem.
- During months five and six, assist the group of residents in developing and implementing a plan to address one aspect of the identified problem.

NOTE: The above objectives are based on a set of assumptions about the identified problems and the proposed solutions. First, all residents cannot be organized at once to become involved in a planning effort; therefore the decision was made to start with a small group of leaders who would engage in meaningful decision-making activities and then expand the effort. Second, organizational staff will be used primarily to develop the skills of the residents, assisting in their efforts as needed but refraining from playing a dominant decision-making role. Finally, if residents are to assume

responsibility for their neighborhood, they must see a potential for success in impacting the neighborhood; therefore, only one aspect of the problem will be addressed initially.

Activities/Tasks

Activities are the concrete action steps needed to carry out each objective. They must be specific, time-framed and measurable. Tasks are the detailed steps needed to carry out each activity. They too must be specific, time-framed and measurable. Taken together, activities and tasks describe exactly how the objectives are to be carried out. The relationship between activities/tasks and the other elements of the plan can be illustrated through the following diagram:



Length of time needed to accomplish each element decreases as you become more specific.

Example: Given the first objective: "to recruit 15-20 neighborhood leaders to work together to assess and address a major problem in the neighborhood," needed tasks and activities are:

Activity 1: During month one, identify neighborhood leaders.

Tasks: Talk to identified formal leaders of the neighborhood (clergymen, elected officials, heads of organizations). Talk to residents at random (find out who they think knows the neighborhood well). Attend neighborhood meetings.

Activity 2: During month one, motivate identified leaders to join the effort.

Tasks: Prepare specific statements about purposes, expectations and benefits of involvement. Talk to each identified leaders individually. Encourage them to talk to one another.

Activity 3: By the end of month two, orient leaders who will be involved.

Tasks: Prepare and disseminate useful written materials. Plan and conduct a meeting to clarify purpose, expectations.

Roles/Responsibilities

To effectively implement the plan that has been developed, you must also assign clear roles and responsibilities to individuals to ensure that all aspects of the plan are integrated and can be carried out.

Roles relate to the work functions that are embodied in the goal statements and the relationships between individuals or groups of individuals who may be focusing attention on different goals. Responsibilities relate to the specific work that must be done (activities, tasks) by those filling various roles. All individuals who will be actively involved in the implementation of the plan must have clearly defined roles and responsibilities to ensure that everyone is working toward the same results. If at this point, you experience difficulty in defining roles and responsibilities, or during implementation you find there is confusion among individuals about who is responsible for what, review the goals and objectives. If they are unclear, then roles and responsibilities will remain unclear.

Example: This organization employs a neighborhood organizer who will initially work to form the leadership group and will carry out the activities/tasks identified.

Internal/External Resources

As a part of the needs assessment process, planners must collect data about and identify the resources available to address the problem. At a minimum this will consist of: reviewing the history of your organization in relationship to the problem; identifying other organizations or individuals that have addressed/are addressing the problem and the impact of their efforts; identifying the information and skills brought to your effort by all individuals involved.

Thorough analysis of the problem sometimes will yield further information on resources which may be used for implementation.

Example: Through the data collection procedures used to examine the problem, we discovered that there is a small, identifiable group of residents that have been actively engaged in planning and implementing services for the neighborhood, often serving on a number of advisory boards or as volunteers for programs being implemented by neighborhood organizations. This group of residents should be able to provide insight into the neighborhood and may be instrumental in the identification and training of neighborhood leaders or in the effort to educate/motivate other residents.

Potential Problems/Proposed Solutions

Another aspect of examining resources is anticipating potential problems. Before implementation begins, all goals and objectives should be reviewed to determine whether there are any factors which may prohibit you from achieving them. For each potential problem identified, possible solutions should be developed drawing upon the resources that have been identified. These elements should be built into the plan.

Example: A potential problem in carrying out the stated objectives is that neighborhood residents who become involved in the effort may initially look to organizational staff for leadership. If this is not properly addressed, the intention of the effort will be subverted.

Potential Solution: Develop and conduct training sessions with organizational staff in methods for developing the leadership abilities of others and facilitating small groups in ways that allow leadership to emerge.

Mechanisms for Monitoring and Evaluating

Before implementation of the plan begins, planners must consider the necessity and importance of monitoring and evaluating the implementation to ensure that the plan is being carried out and to determine whether the desired results are being achieved. A review of the plan must be conducted to ensure that goals, objectives, activities and tasks can be measured and assessed.

Monitoring relates to the regular assessment of the implementation of the plan. As goals, objectives and activities are defined, planners should determine how the day-to-day implementation of the plan can be monitored, and determine what information must be routinely kept or recorded to regularly and reliably check progress. A mechanism should be established (e.g. regular staff reports, logs, etc.) to collect data needed to monitor the plan during the implementation period.

Example: Staff assigned to develop the leadership group will submit activity reports every two weeks. Included in these reports will be the stated objectives addressed during that period and the activities undertaken to achieve these objectives. Documents which further describe the activities are to be attached, e.g., lists of neighborhood residents participating (with pertinent information), complete training designs for all sessions held, minutes of meetings, etc.

Evaluation relates to the assessment of the impact of the planned activities on the identified problems. As goals and objectives are being defined, planners must determine how achievement and impact will be measured. They must identify the information that must be collected and reviewed to determine whether the identified problems have been addressed by the implementation of the plan. A mechanism for collecting evaluation data throughout the implementation period should be established.

Example: In reviewing the problem statements and goals it is clear that data must be collected on: the quality of resident participation in identifying and addressing neighborhood needs (are they in fact engaging in decision-making and exerting leadership?); the ability of residents to engage in planning (have their skills been increased?); and the perceptions/attitudes of residents in terms of taking responsibility for what happens in the neighborhood.

These data will be collected through reports of the meetings of the residents, reports of training sessions and interviews with residents.

USING THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK IN DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

Adapting the Planning Framework for VJOP/II

The planning framework described in Section I forms the foundation of the process to be followed in developing Action Plans for local projects of the Violent Juvenile Offender Program, Part II (VJOP/II). It requires some slight modifications, however, since a few elements of the framework have already been defined by those who have planned the program at the national level.

The general problem (current condition) to be addressed by all eight local projects, for example, has been identified as violent juvenile crime in the neighborhood. The ultimate goal is also defined for all eight projects; as stated in the Request for Proposals (RFP), it is "to prevent and reduce violent juvenile crime." This ultimate goal implies that the vision (or ideal condition) for the national program is one of neighborhoods experiencing no violent juvenile crime. It also implies a common mission for all targeted neighborhoods: "to eliminate violent juvenile crime".

Some general guidelines for the program approach to be implemented in all local projects is also given, in the form of the four mandated program elements: Violent Crime Intervention, Family Support Network, Institutional Mediation and Youth Skills Development. These guidelines only outline the broad parameters of the program approach, however, leaving a great deal of room for creativity in designing the specific strategies to be used in each local project. The program elements reflect the VJOP/II theory that if changes can be effected in the major socializing institutions that influence youth, making those institutions more responsive to the needs of neighborhood youth, then violent juvenile crime in the neighborhood will be reduced.

Finally, a format for the written Action Plan has been provided by the national program planners. It includes all the items that need to be covered in the planning for each program element. This format is included in the appendix.

Understanding that these elements of the planning framework are the "givens" in adapting the framework to the VJOP/II, it is useful to examine how a local project might systematically apply the remainder of the framework to develop its individual Action Plan. Application of the planning framework should assist local planners to work from the general problem to specific solutions. As each element is explained, an example drawn from a hypothetical local project is presented.

Agreeing on the Project's Purpose

The first step is to review the general problem (current condition) that concerns the project and agree on the project's overall vision, mission, and ultimate goal. As stated previously, these are all "given" for VJOP/II local projects:

- general problem: violent juvenile crime in the neighborhood
- vision: a neighborhood experiencing no violent juvenile crime
- mission: to eliminate violent juvenile crime in the neighborhood
- ultimate goal: to prevent and reduce violent juvenile crime in the neighborhood.

The ultimate goal implies that the outcome we hope to see at the end of the project is reduced violent juvenile crime in the neighborhood. It is essential that there be agreement among planners on the project's ultimate goal because all immediate goals of the project should work toward fulfilling it.

Developing Problem Statements

The next step is conducting a needs assessment to determine what problems or needs exists in the neighborhood that may be contributing to the larger problem of violent juvenile crime. In the VJOP/II, the neighborhood needs assessment is carried out through the data collection and data analysis phases of the Crime Analysis System. By the time local project planners are ready to develop their Action Plan, they will have in hand a great deal of information about the conditions that may be related to violent juvenile crime in the neighborhood: they will have a good understanding of how local socializing institutions function, as a result of the study group process, and they will have quantitative data gathered from individuals and institutions and analyzed by the URSA Institute.

To complete the needs assessment process, the Resident Mobilization Council (RMC) of the local project must develop problem statements based on the information they have and then establish priorities as to which problems the project will address initially. It may be easiest for the study groups that have already worked with data related to particular institutions to develop problem statements based on these data, and then have the full RMC select priority problem statements from among all those generated by the study groups. The problem statements are critical in the Action Planning process because they become the basis for the project's immediate goals.

Developing and setting priorities among problem statements is a valuable process for strengthening the unity of the neighborhood leadership (represented by the RMC) in that it forces them to develop consensus around what conditions should and should not exist in the neighborhood. This process begins to focus attention on the values of the group, which will also inform their selection of project goals and, later, strategies to achieve those goals.

Examples: (1) Based on feedback received from URSA Institute on the analysis of school data, the study group addressing school issues developed the following problem statement: "There is a high incidence of alcohol use on school grounds, contributing to violent juvenile behavior on school grounds."

(2) Data analysis also reveals that assaults are especially common on the 500 block of 10th Street, where there are a number of abandoned buildings and very few people on the street in the evening. The study-group reviewing these data developed the following problem statement: "Because there are few potential witnesses of crime, the 500 block of 10th street is especially dangerous for pedestrians in the evening."

Developing Goals

Once problem statements have been developed and priorities established for the problems to be initially addressed, the next step is to develop goals for the project. Goals are statements of desired results or outcomes. For each problem statement, which reflects a condition that currently exists, at least one immediate goal statement can be developed to reflect the condition that should exist by the completion of the period covered by the Action Plan. All of these goals should contribute to the ultimate goal of preventing and reducing violent juvenile crime.

Examples: (1) Referring to the first problem statement cited in the previous example -- "There is a high incidence of alcohol use on school grounds" --the goal might be "to reduce the incidences of alcohol use on school grounds." This would be an appropriate immediate goal statement because, in theory, reducing the incidence of alcohol use would contribute to the larger intermediate goal of reducing youth's violent behavior on school grounds, which in turn would contribute to the ultimate goal of reducing violent juvenile crime in the neighborhood.

(2) For the second problem statement cited -- "Because there are few potential witnesses of crime, the 500 block of 10th Street is especially dangerous for pedestrians in the evening" -- the goal may be "to increase the number of potential witnesses of crime on that block in the evenings." A goal with a different focus would be "to reduce the number of pedestrians who walk on the 500 block of 10th Street in the evenings." Either of these goals would contribute to the larger intermediate goal of reducing assaults in that area, which would in turn contribute to the ultimate goal of reducing violent juvenile crime in the neighborhood.

The process of developing goal statements further forces the neighborhood leadership to come to consensus around the conditions that should or should not exist in the neighborhood. It serves to further clarify the values they hold in common which, it is hoped, will come to be shared by the neighborhood as a whole through the work of the project.

Identifying Strategies to Achieve the Goals

The next step in the action planning process is to identify strategies that will lead to the achievement of each goal. This step is comparable to the development of objectives in the general planning framework: it is the process of identifying the means to be used to achieve the desired ends (stated in the goals).

Usually there are many possible strategies that can serve to bring about a particular desired result. In the VJOP/II, your choice of strategies is guided to some extent by the framework of the four mandated program elements. Because these program elements comprise a major component of the overall program model, it is important that every strategy implemented by a local project fit within at least one of these elements.

To ensure that all four elements are addressed, it may be facilitative to divide the full Resident Mobilization Council into committees that correspond to the four program elements: Violent Crime Intervention, Family Support Network, Youth Skills Development and Institutional Mediation. These committees would develop plans for the four program elements and then be responsible for overseeing implementation of the same elements during the coming months, making this an ongoing committee structure for the RMC.

Each committee preparing to develop a portion of the Action Plan for a particular program element should have a list of all problem statements assigned as priorities by the full

RMC, regardless of which study group developed them, and a list of the goals which address them. The reason for this is that some goals may be appropriately addressed by more than one program element; in fact, some should be, for maximum impact. Also it is quite probable that any one program element will address several goals.

Examples: (1) The Violent Crime Intervention Committee of the RMC has identified the following goal to be addressed by their program element: "to increase the number of potential witnesses of crime on the 500 block of 10th Street in the evenings." One strategy they might choose to address this problem would be to operate neighborhood resident patrols in this area in the evenings, having teams of residents regularly walk or drive through to observe what is happening and report any suspicious activity to the police. Another might be to ensure that any residents who do live on that block are active "block watchers," keeping an eye on activity outside their homes. The related goal of reducing the number of pedestrians who walk on that block in the evenings might be addressed by alerting residents of nearby blocks through block watch meetings on their own blocks.

(2) The Institutional Mediation Committee of the RMC identified the goal "to reduce the incidence of alcohol use on school grounds" as one appropriate for their program element. They might select a strategy such as encouraging the school to conduct an alcohol abuse prevention program during school hours which has been designed by school personnel, students, and parents.

Identifying Activities and Tasks to Carry Out the Strategies

Once strategies have been identified, the next step in developing the Action Plan is to determine what activities must be done to implement the strategies and what tasks must be done to carry out the activities.

Example: To implement resident patrols, activities might include recruiting residents interested in serving on the patrols, conducting training for these residents, assigning people specific times to serve on patrols, holding follow-up meetings with all patrollers, and keeping reports on the patrols' activities.

There are a number of tasks that could be identified under each of these activities.

Example: To recruit residents to serve on patrols, it might be necessary to attend block club meetings in areas near the 500 block of 10th Street, distribute fliers in nearby areas, and ask local leaders to identify possible patrollers, etc.

Determining Time Frames for Activities and Tasks

When activities and tasks have been identified, the proposed start date and completion date for implementation should be assigned for each activity and, if desired, each task. If activities and tasks are listed logically and sequentially, these dates should follow more or less chronologically. If an activity is ongoing, don't just write "ongoing" in the Action Plan, but rather specify one or more interim milestones that will be observable or measurable during this Action Plan period.

Example: If resident patrol meetings are an ongoing activity, but occur each Wednesday evening, the entry under "completion date" might read "ongoing: weekly on Wednesdays." If recruitment of residents to be involved in the Violent Crime Intervention activities is an ongoing activity, there might be an interim completion date for recruitment of fifteen residents to serve on patrols, with a later completion date for recruitment of eight residents to talk to neighboring block clubs about what areas are less safe to walk in at night.

It should be noted that it is not necessary to begin all strategies under all program elements at the same time during the first Action Plan period. It is necessary, however, to have all strategies fully underway no later than six months from the date the Action Plan implementation begins. Note also that during the first Action Plan period, only one of the three institutions targeted for Institutional Mediation activities must be addressed, i.e., either the schools, the juvenile justice system or the economic/employment sector ("youth enterprise"). The other two institutions can be impacted upon later in the project implementation period.

Anticipating Potential Problems and Necessary Resources

Persons responsible for implementing the identified activities should be indicated in the Action Plan. Potential problems may arise and proposed solutions to address those problems should be added to the plan. Where there is a lack of proposed solutions, or where the proposed solutions appear to be less than satisfactory, there may be a technical assistance need area that should also be noted. Where you can identify a technical assistance resource available to meet the need, that

too should be noted on the plan. Finally, other resources that may be needed to facilitate implementation should be identified, as well as such resources available.

Integrating and Finalizing the Action Plan Draft

When all steps described above have been undertaken by the committees responsible for the four program elements, the planning process still has not been completed. It is necessary for the full Resident Mobilization Council to review the draft plans developed by the committees and integrate their work. They must ensure that the final Action Plan is unified and truly responsive to the major problems or need areas of the neighborhood that are thought to contribute to violent juvenile crime.

To do this, the RMC should first refer to the original list of priority problem statements and goals and ask two basic questions:

- (1) Are there any goals that did not seem to be appropriately addressed by any of the program elements?

If so, the RMC and project staff should determine who else, outside the project, could address the identified problem so that the project can refer it to them and then follow up to see that it is addressed. (Remember that the project is obliged to implement the VJOP/II program model as developed by the national planning group, and this model does not address every condition that might possibly contribute to violent juvenile crime.)

Where this situation arises, it is appropriate to create a fifth category, beyond the four program elements, for your Action Plan: "Resource Coordination." Under this category you would include plans for addressing the goals not appropriately addressed by the four program elements through referral and coordination with other organizations or other parts of the project's parent organization.

- (2) For each goal addressed by each program element, are there any other program elements that could also be addressing this goal, for maximum impact?

If so, it may be necessary for the committee responsible for that program element to go back and address that goal in their part of the plan.

Gathering Feedback on the Draft Action Plan

When the steps described above have been completed, a full draft of the Action Plan is finished. However, the work of the RMC does not stop at this point. If the project is truly going to involve the whole neighborhood, and not just the small group of leadership who comprise the RMC, then the wider neighborhood must have an opportunity to participate in the development of the plan. The next step is gathering feedback on the draft Action Plan from the larger neighborhood, as well as from the national actors, as required. This step also serves to educate and motivate residents around the problems being addressed by the plan.

Feedback from the larger neighborhood can be obtained in many different ways:

- Individual leaders who serve on the RMC can meet with their constituency groups to get their particular perspectives on the plan.
- Public forums can be held which all interested neighborhood residents may attend to express their views on the plan.
- The plan can be circulated to individuals who are thought to have especially good insights about the neighborhood or about juvenile crime prevention.
- A select group of such individuals, including youth, might be invited to participate in an organized group review of the plan.
- The draft plan could be published in a neighborhood newsletter with a request that residents interested in providing feedback and/or in participating in the project contact a project representative.

Only the imagination limits the number of ways that residents' feedback on the draft Action Plan can be obtained; the important thing is to involve as many residents as possible in this phase of the process. The more that residents feel they had a role in the creation of the final plan, the more likely they are to want to be involved in its implementation.

At the end of the designated feedback period, the RMC committees that worked on developing the draft plan need to meet again, with the new information gleaned from the feedback in hand, to make any modifications necessary. Then the full RMC should again review the work of the committees to ensure that the Action Plan as a whole is integrated. When this has been done, Action Plan development has been completed. The plan should now be sent, in final form, to the OJJDP Program Manager.

THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN
(A SUMMARY)

Steps in Developing an Action Plan

1. Review current condition of concern of project.

Agree on project's vision, mission, and ultimate goal.
2. Conduct a neighborhood needs assessment.
 - a. Data gathering
 - b. Data analysis, resulting in problem statements

Process Recommended to Complete Steps

1. RMC orientation and training meeting(s) with staff
2. Implementation of Crime Analysis System
 - a. Residents mobilized by RMC conduct survey, perhaps with staff assistance. Staff compile aggregate data from institutions.
 - b. RMC forms study groups. Study groups conduct studies of the socializing institutions to develop understanding of the context for data; then review data analysis sent by URSA, develop problem statements relating to each set of data, and recommend priorities for problems to be addressed by project.

Full RMC reviews study groups' recommendations and makes final decision on problems to be addressed by project. Through this process the neighborhood leadership begins to develop consensus around what conditions should and should not exist in the neighborhood.

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| <p>3. Develop project goals (statements of proposed outcomes) based on problem statements.</p> | <p>3. Study groups develop one (or more) goal(s) for each problem statement they developed. Through the goal development process, their common values are further clarified.</p> |
| <p>4. Develop initial draft of detailed plans for achieving project goals.</p> <p>a. Identify strategies that will lead to achievement of the goals.</p> <p>b. Identify activities and tasks that must be done to implement the strategies.</p> <p>c. Identify time frames for completion of all activities (and tasks if desired).</p> <p>d. Identify person(s) responsible for all activities.</p> <p>e. Identify anticipated problems that might impede implementation of activities.</p> <p>f. Identify proposed solutions for all identified problems.</p> <p>g. Identify anticipated technical assistance needs, based on problem areas for which proposed solutions are lacking or possibly inadequate. Where possible, identify a technical assistance resource available.</p> <p>h. Identify other resources that may be needed to facilitate implementation. Where possible, identify such resources that are available.</p> | <p>4. RMC is reconstituted into committees corresponding to the four program elements. After reviewing the basic approach called for by the specific program elements, committees select from RMC's list of goals those can be appropriately addressed by their particular program elements. The committees then complete each of the steps enumerated.</p> |

5. Incorporate the draft plans developed by committees into an integrated Action Plan (first draft).

5. Full RMC develops the integrated plan:

- Reviews plans developed by committees to ensure they are consistent with the national program model.
- Determines whether there are any goals which are not appropriately addressed by any of the program elements. If so, identifies strategies to address these goals through resource coordination and notes them in a "Resource Coordination" section of the Action Plan.

Determines, for each goal, whether any program element should be addressing it but has not yet. If so, assign the appropriate committees to incorporate such goals into their parts of the plan.

Committees rework drafts as assigned. Full RMC approves finished first draft.

6. Gather feedback on the draft Action Plan from the larger neighborhood and from national actors as required.

6. Many possible processes may be used, including meeting with RMC members' constituencies, public forums, circulation for individual comment, group review sessions, publishing the plan with a request for feedback, etc.

7. Modify draft plan as necessary, to respond to feedback.

7. RMC committees make modifications based on feedback.

Full RMC reviews modified plan again to ensure that it is integrated, thorough and consistent with the national program model; adopts finished Action Plan.

8. Send finished Action Plan to OJJDP Program Manager.

MAKING EFFECTIVE USE OF THE ACTION PLAN

Monitoring Implementation of the Plan

The Action Plan should be the basis for all project activity in the months it covers. To ensure that it is in fact serving as the guide for all activity, monitoring must be done on a regular basis.

Monitoring is nothing more than comparing what is going on at a given point in time with what should be going on, according to the plan: "Are the activities and tasks that are supposed to be taking place at this time actually in progress, as planned?" Periodic monitoring enables you to detect situations where problems have arisen and do something about them before they get too far out of hand.

With staff assistance, the Resident Mobilization Council should exercise ongoing responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Action Plan. The RMC committees that developed the specific plans for the four program elements now are the logical ones to take responsibility for the oversight of those elements.

Evaluating

At the end of the time period covered by the Action Plan, the effectiveness of the plan should be evaluated. Evaluation involves comparing the outcomes that were expected to result from implementation of project strategies with the actual conditions observable at the end of the Action Plan period. Information about the conditions at the end of the Action Plan period will be gathered largely through the collection and analysis phase of the next Crime Analysis System (CAS) cycle.

The focus of evaluation is on impact, whereas the focus of the monitoring during implementation was on process. Sometimes the process may be implemented exactly as planned, but the projected impact still is not achieved. If this is found to be the case, replanning must occur to identify strategies that may be more likely to yield the desired results.

Replanning

Replanning means carrying out the planning process over again to develop a new Action Plan for the next period of time. Taking into account the information on specific strategies' effectiveness, which was brought out through evaluation, and considering the new data on neighborhood conditions elucidated through the CAS, the new Action Plan can correct or refine the

project's approach while also laying out the specific scope of work for the next several months.

Then the new plan will be implemented (with further monitoring), evaluated, and revised again, and the cycle will continue. Through this process you can be assured that your project will be reflective of the wisdom of the neighborhood leadership, consistent with the national program model, and based on the real needs of the neighborhood as neighborhood conditions continue to evolve.

The planning cycles of the VJOP/II also offer the opportunity to increase residents' abilities to identify and address neighborhood problems. As residents gain experience in applying planning skills, they will become more and more capable of affecting positive change within their neighborhood.

APPENDIX

VJOP/II ACTION PLAN

PROGRAM ELEMENT: _____

GOALS ADDRESSED: _____

(INTENDED OUTCOMES) _____

STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES/ TASKS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	
			START DATE	COMPLETION DATE

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS	PROPOSED SOLUTIONS	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES AVAILABLE NEEDED	OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE NEEDED