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# National Institute of Justice

Research in Brief

April 1994

## Update on NIJ-Sponsored Research: Six New Reports

**T**his Update is the first in a new *Research in Brief* series designed for busy criminal justice professionals, officials, and policymakers. It highlights the key issues and findings of six recently completed research projects sponsored by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ)—on drugs and crime, anti-stalking legislation, community policing, and the control of police use of force. These findings are relevant to policies and practices in many areas of criminal justice.

For readers who want to delve further into these studies, NIJ also publishes the researchers' complete reports. These can be obtained free by contacting the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850 (806-851-3420). Please use the NCJ number that precedes each description below when placing your order.

### Community Responses to Drug Abuse: A Program Evaluation

by Dennis P. Rosenbaum

1994. NCJ 145945

*Discussed in this Research Report:* An NIJ-funded evaluation of how grassroots organizations in 10 sites responded to problems caused by drugs and specifically what strategies they developed to reduce drug abuse and fear and improve the quality of neighborhood life. The report covers ways to empower residents to participate in

ridding their neighborhoods of drugs, crime, and fear, and to coordinate efforts with police, churches, social services, and housing authorities.

#### Key issues

The National Crime Prevention Council, together with the National Training and Information Center, a Chicago-based organization that provides training and technical assistance to community organizations, developed the 3-year Community Responses to Drug Abuse (CRDA) demonstration program, funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. CRDA worked with grassroots organizations in each of the cities to:

- Raise awareness of drug issues and organize the community to implement surveillance and reporting strategies such as neighborhood watch.
- Strengthen enforcement efforts by reporting hot spots and drug houses to the police, monitoring court cases, and supporting legislation that would help in apprehending and prosecuting drug sellers.
- Work with police and public health agencies to close crack houses.
- Protect youths by establishing drug-free school zones, drug prevention education programs, and recreational, tutoring, and job training programs.
- Improve the physical environment by making use of abandoned buildings as rehabilitated low-income housing or drug treatment centers.

#### Findings

Despite initial reluctance and obstacles, the local organizations were able, in the first year of the demonstration program, to:

- Develop realistic plans.
- Create community task forces representing key players (police and other criminal justice agencies, substance abuse agencies, and school groups).
- Implement a variety of targeted drug-prevention strategies.

Subsequently, encouraged by these successes, the community organizations focused on broader prevention and youth-oriented strategies. The grassroots organizations also worked successfully with the police, which was a new experience for some.

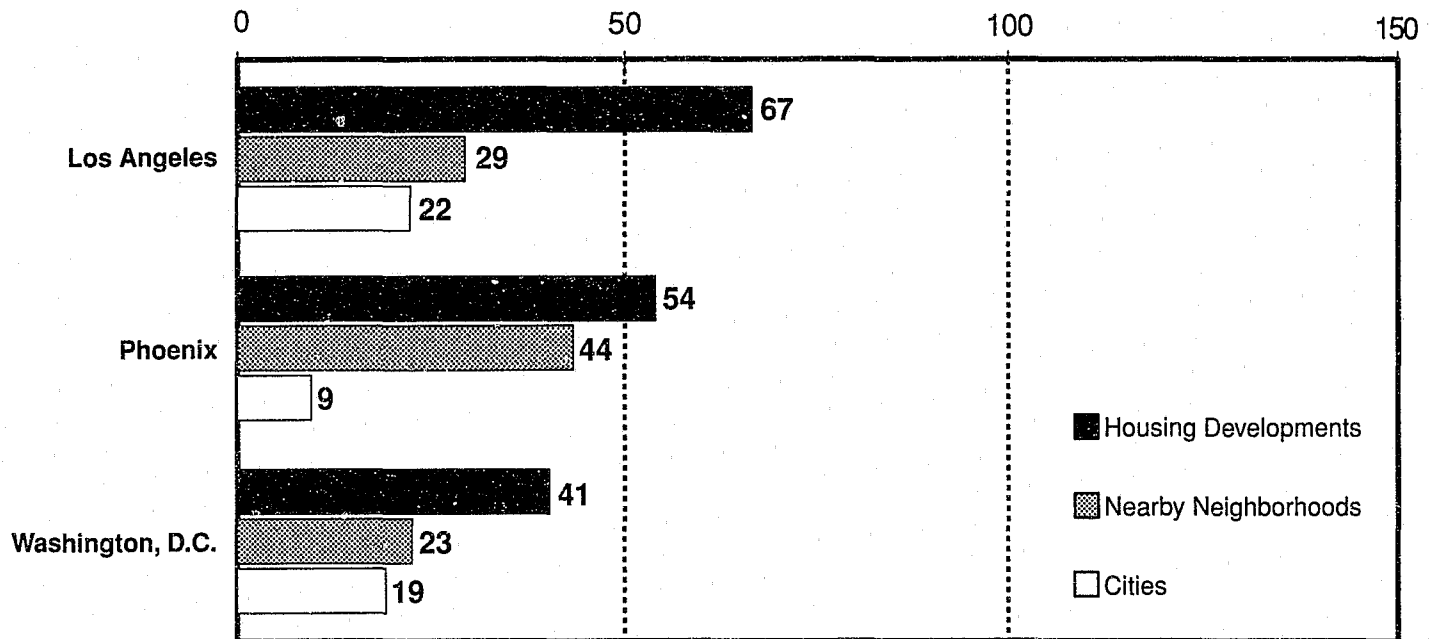
In addition:

- They developed partnerships with other criminal justice agencies, fire and housing departments, city councils, school boards, churches, and recreation departments.
- They overcame residents' fear of retaliation for becoming involved in anti-drug-abuse programs by organizing group events such as marches and rallies on issues indirectly related to drugs and crime.

The technical assistance offered by the National Crime Prevention Council and the National Training and Information Center was also a key factor in the CRDA program's success.

*Target audience:* Local criminal justice and law enforcement administrators, community organizers, and staff of public and private community agencies offering educational, health, housing and social services.

## Offenses Known to the Police/1,000 Residents (Annual Average)



Source: *Drugs and Crime in Public Housing: A Three-City Analysis*, p. vii.

### Drugs and Crime in Public Housing: A Three-City Analysis

by Terence Dunworth and Aaron Saiger  
1994. NCJ 145329

**Discussed in this Research Report:** An analysis of drug offense, violent offense, and property offense rates in public housing developments in Los Angeles, Phoenix, and the District of Columbia for the period 1986–1989.

#### Key issues

The study sought answers to three major questions:

- How can crime problems in housing developments be quantified using existing records?
- What are the rates of drug and other serious offenses in conventional public housing developments, and how do these rates compare to rates citywide and in urban neighborhoods close to public housing?

- What is the extent of variation in offense rates among individual housing developments?

In each of the cities, approximately half of the public housing population was studied, with police departments supplying data on all offenses and arrests that occurred during the years under study. The same information was gathered for nearby private-housing neighborhoods, and both were compared to citywide statistics.

#### Findings

Researchers found that:

- Aggregate rates for public housing drug offenses were very high (33 per 1,000 in the District of Columbia, 53 per 1,000 in Phoenix, and 58 per 1,000 in Los Angeles for drug offenses) relative to other areas.
- Rates for public housing violent offenses were even higher (41, 54, and 67 per 1,000 in the District of Columbia, Phoenix, and Los Angeles, respectively).
- Reported property offense rates (for burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft) were relatively low in housing develop-

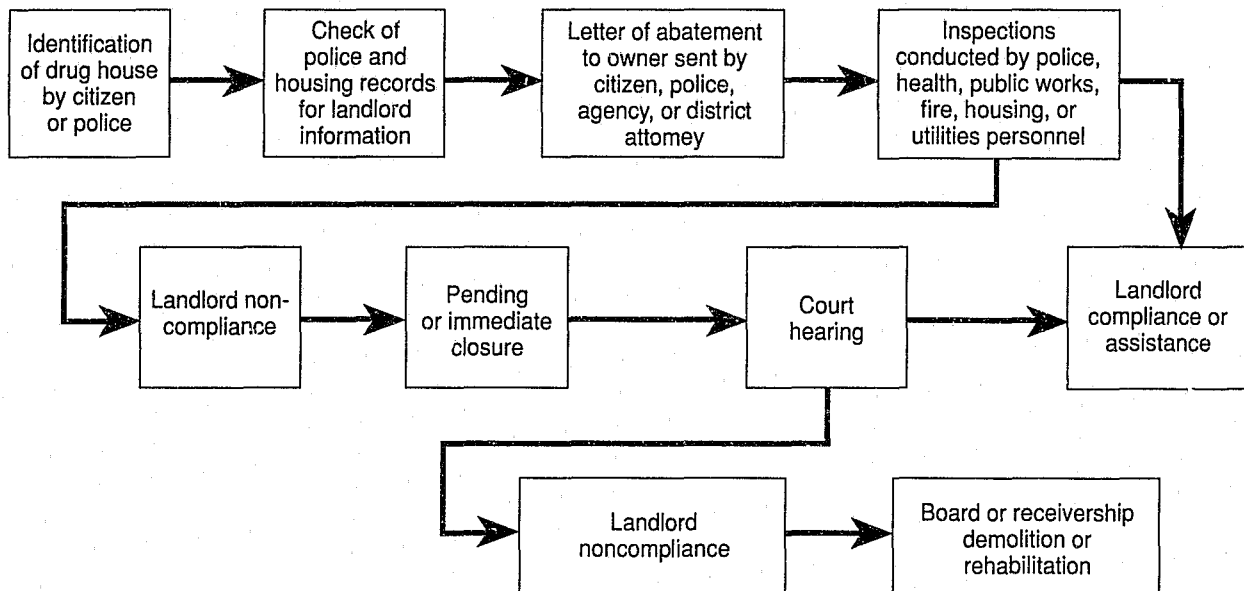
ments. Factors contributing to this finding may be the low rate of reporting and the fact that there was relatively little to steal.

- There was substantial variation in offense rates among housing developments within individual cities. In Los Angeles, for instance, the rate in the “worst” development was 15 times higher than that in the “best” one.
- Police activity in housing developments was roughly proportional to offense rates in these developments.

Researchers concluded that crime control initiatives in public housing need to be tightly focused on the problems of the particular developments that have the highest offense rates and that police and public housing authorities need to cooperate more to control crime.

**Target audience:** Administrators and staff of Federal and local law enforcement agencies, public housing authorities, community groups, and social service agencies; and members of public housing resident councils.

## Removing the Place of Drug Activity: The Drug House



Source: *Community Responses to Drug Abuse: A Program Evaluation*, p.9.

## Project To Develop a Model Anti-Stalking Code for States

by the National Criminal Justice Association

1993. NCJ 144477

**Discussed in this Research Report:** A model code against stalking, accompanied by a profile of existing State statutes, an overview of police agencies' current management of stalking incidents, and recommendations for States' consideration concerning bail and sentencing, code implementation, and stalking-related research.

### Key issues

Stalking is generally defined as willful, malicious, and repeated following and harassing of another person, but some States add other provisions as well. The defining elements for most stalking statutes are threatening behavior and criminal intent.

Two difficult constitutional issues arise in developing anti-stalking legislation:

- Ensuring that the legislation does not infringe on an individual's right to freedom of expression, guaranteed by the first amendment.
- Ensuring the right to due process, guaranteed by the fifth amendment.

The punishment must also be proportionate to the injury suffered by the victim. Other issues to consider include:

- The issue of double jeopardy, whereby one cannot prosecute an offender for stalking based on the same incident for which the defendant was prosecuted for criminal contempt.
- Links between the criminal law and civil remedies, civil commitment, and other related laws such as criminal trespass, terroristic threat, and harassment laws.

### Findings

The model anti-stalking code establishes the following aspects of behavior, taken together, as constituting stalking:

- Purposefully engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that

would cause a reasonable person to fear bodily injury or death to him/herself or an immediate family member.

- Knowing that the person will be placed in reasonable fear of bodily injury or fear of death to him/herself or an immediate family member.
- Inducing fear in the specific person of bodily injury or death for him/herself or an immediate family member.

The report recommends that States consider:

- Making stalking a felony offense, with incarceration as an option for all stalking convictions.
- Providing for victim safety in setting conditions of release, including having no contact with the victim and monitoring convicted stalkers through electronic monitoring or house arrest during their probation or parole periods.
- Allowing for penalty enhancements for aggravating circumstances such as prior felony or stalking offenses.
- Requiring convicted stalkers to pay restitution to their victims.

- Requiring evaluation and offering counseling as part of the sentence and as a condition for release on probation or parole.

**Target audience:** State legislators, prosecutors, public defenders, judges, victim rights advocates, and criminal justice administrators in States and localities.

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### Evaluating Patrol Officer Performance Under Community Policing: The Houston Experience

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by Mary Ann Wycoff and Timothy N. Oettmeier

1994. NCJ 142462

**Discussed in this Research Report:** A new personnel performance evaluation process developed to support and promote Neighborhood Oriented Policing (NOP) in Houston, Texas. The evaluation sought to determine whether this new process effectively communicated and legitimized the organization's management philosophy as expressed by the redefinition under NOP of roles, responsibilities, and relationships among patrol officers and supervisors.

#### Key issues

Ways of measuring officer performance must be different under community policing, which is oriented toward crime prevention, documentation of problems, and problem solving in addition to apprehension of offenders.

- The most readily available traditional measures of job performance (rapid response, number of arrests, conformance to attendance and safety regulations) overlook as much as 70 percent of the NOP police role.
- New job performance measures must now include input from citizens, who are key players in keeping neighborhoods free of crime.
- The emphasis on teamwork in NOP may call for group as well as individual evaluations.

#### Findings

The Houston Police Department found that the redesigned individual performance evaluation process, while more time consuming, measured self-reported activities, attitudes, and perceptions of officers more effectively. It also allowed for officer assessment of supervisors and citizen assessment of officers.

Researchers monitored the use of the redesigned performance evaluations and surveyed officers who participated in the new evaluation process and others in a control group who were evaluated the traditional way. They also interviewed officers, sergeants, lieutenants, and captains in the experimental areas to learn about their experiences with the new system.

- The most positive feedback came from officers who believed in foot patrol, actively conducted problem-solving activities, and were satisfied with their supervision and the recognition they received from work.
- The most negative feedback came from officers who gave a high priority to traditional patrol functions.

A survey of burglary victims found slight positive effects, but it was considered unlikely that any differences would be detected over the brief 6-month program period.

The researchers concluded that whatever style of policing a department adopts, the performance evaluation process ought to reflect the changing needs of the community and the changing skills of the department's personnel.

**Target audience:** Police administrators, human resource personnel, managers, and supervisors, particularly in agencies developing community policing and other styles that include orientation toward knowing the community and solving community problems.

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### Community Policing in Madison: Quality From the Inside Out—An Evaluation of Implementation and Impact

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by Mary Ann Wycoff and Wesley K. Skogan

1993. NCJ 144390

**Discussed in this Research Report:** The effort by the Madison, Wisconsin, Police Department to create a new organizational design to support "quality policing," a term that encompasses community-oriented policing, problem-solving, and employee-oriented management. Over a 3-year period, an NIJ-sponsored evaluation team monitored the implementation of quality policing in an experimental police district covering one-sixth of the city; the team compared the attitudes of police and residents in the experimental district and the rest of the city.

#### Key issues

Critical preconditions to improved delivery of law enforcement services were:

- Quality leadership, an approach (based on the work of management expert Edwards Deming) that emphasizes the role of managers as facilitators in improving systems, involving employees in decisionmaking, employing data-based problem-solving approaches, promoting teamwork, encouraging risk-taking and creativity, and giving and receiving feedback from employees.
- A healthy workplace where employees are treated as "internal customers" whose problems should be identified and resolved.
- Physical decentralization, whereby small workgroups enable detectives and patrol officers to work more closely with each other and in proximity to citizens.

Fulfilling these conditions was expected to lead to community benefits such as improved service delivery and neighborhood conditions, increased citizen involvement and satisfaction with police, and reduced crime, victimization, and fear.

## Findings

The project team in the experimental police district identified problems that needed correcting, held community meetings, and trained officers in problem-oriented policing. They worked on developing an environment in which compromise, teamwork, and creativity are stressed. Overlapping shifts provided opportunities for officers to transmit information to each other.

It was found that in the experimental district:

- A new, participatory management approach was successfully implemented. Managers in the experimental district saw themselves as coaches who encourage problem-solving by offering ideas and information rather than directing the activities of the officers under them.
- Employee attitudes toward the organization and toward their work improved. Officers used significantly less sick leave and indicated they had a greater sense of doing a "whole" job and having autonomy in doing that job.
- Opportunities for citizen interaction and involvement increased, resulting in reduced citizen perceptions that crime was a problem and a growing belief that police were working on problems of importance to neighborhood residents.

**Target audience:** Law enforcement administrators and managers, local officials and community leaders, and all persons interested in community policing.

## The Role of Police Psychology in Controlling Excessive Force

by Ellen M. Scrivner, Ph.D.

1993. NCJ 146206

**Discussed in this Research Report:** The role of police psychologists in preventing and identifying police officers at risk for use of excessive, nonlethal force and the factors that contribute to police use of excessive force in performing their duties.

## Key issues

A sample of 65 police psychologists were asked:

- What types of professional services they provided to police departments.
- How these services were used to control the use of force.
- How they characterized officers who abuse force (e.g., do they represent "bad apples" or are they products of organizational failure?).
- What intervention strategies based on police psychology they could suggest that could help police managers reduce the incidence of excessive force.

## Findings

The author analyzed the psychologists' responses and found that:

- Psychologists were more involved with counseling and evaluating than with training and monitoring the behavior of police officers.
- Lack of coordination of core psychologist functions was a major impediment to the delivery of effective and credible psychological services in police departments.
- Counseling interventions were used to respond to excessive force more frequently than were psychologists' activities that focus on prevention.
- Psychologists used psychological tests and clinical interviews to evaluate police candidates to the near exclusion of other screening methods. However, they were sharply divided on the use of psychological tests to routinely evaluate incumbent officers.

Five different profiles of officers emerged, each exhibiting or experiencing different characteristics or experiences that might lead to their use of excessive force and that require different interventions. These characteristics or experiences were:

- Personality disorders such as lack of empathy for others, and antisocial, narcissistic, and abusive tendencies.

- Previous job-related experiences, such as involvement in justifiable police shootings.
- Early career stage problems having to do with their impressionability, impulsiveness, and low tolerance for frustration and general need for strong supervision.
- A dominant, heavy-handed patrol style that is particularly sensitive to challenge and provocation.
- Personal problems such as separation, divorce, or perceived loss of status that cause extreme anxiety and destabilize job functioning.

Psychologists favored increased monitoring and training as a means of reducing the use of excessive force.

**Target audience:** Police psychologists and law enforcement administrators, supervisors, human resource personnel, and personnel managers.

For further information, contact the following individuals who monitored these NIJ projects:

Lois Mock, NIJ  
Community policing research

David Hayeslip, NIJ  
Crime in public housing research

Charles Lauer, Office of Justice Programs  
Anti-stalking research

Ellen Scrivner, NIJ Fellow  
Police psychology research

*The National Institute of Justice is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.*

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