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AN EVALUATION
OF THE
CITY OF DOVER
"CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER"

GRANT NUMBER

78-I-A1807 B01

PROJECT PERIOD

October 1, 1977 - October 31, 1978

Robert Phoenix
Evaluation Specialist

NEW HAMPSHIRE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

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BACKGROUND

On May 10, 1977, the City of Dover submitted an application to this Commission for funding assistance to establish the position of Crime Prevention Officer for the Dover Police Department. The project was to provide the police department with a full-time officer to develop, implement and direct a city-wide Crime Prevention Program. The full Commission approved the request on June 3, 1977 pending availability of funds. On November 21, 1977, the subgrantee was notified by this Commission that funds had been identified and allocated for the implementation of the project. A project period of October 1, 1977 through October 31, 1978 was established, and funds were awarded on the following basis:

| | |
|------------|------------|
| Federal | \$16,238 |
| Commission | 902 |
| Subgrantee | <u>902</u> |
| Total | \$18,042 |

The itemized budget for the project is:

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Salaries | \$13,096 |
| Fringe Benefits | 1,964 |
| Capital Equipment | 482 |
| All Other (Program materials) | <u>2,500</u> |
| Total | \$18,042 |

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 1977, according to official city reports, the Dover Police Department experienced an annual increase of nearly 12 percent in requests for services. This reflects the typical increase in crime in the recent past

experienced in cities of similar size. In an effort to cope with the increase in crime against property and to improve the efficiency of the Police Department, it was proposed that a Crime Prevention Program be instituted. The program was to develop such sub-programs as: residential and commercial security measures, security hardware, public information and education, police department patrol planning, and establishment of crime patterns. A particularly important aspect of the program was to be public relations development. It was expected that the Crime Prevention Officer would work closely with fraternal, civic, religious and educational organizations to assist in implementation of programs and spark citizen interest and cooperation. The primary objective of the project was to be the reduction of certain categories of crime; i.e., breaking and entering, burglary, theft and vandalism.

The program was to be under the direction of one officer whose primary responsibility would be the Crime Prevention Program. This officer was to be responsible for design, implementation and operation of the program.

Accurate records were to be maintained in an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of the project and its impact on the crime problem in Dover.

PROGRAM OPERATION

Officer Richard Sexton of the Dover Police Department was chosen by Police Chief Charles Reynolds, to assume the position of Crime Prevention Officer. Officer Sexton holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from St. Anselms College, is a graduate of the National Crime Prevention Officers Institute, and has been on the Dover Police Force since 1976.

Officer Sexton's prior police experience includes two years on the Goffstown, New Hampshire Police Department. Additionally, he served in the

capacity of Crime Prevention Specialist with the Harris County Sheriff's Department in Houston, Texas, just prior to accepting the job with the Dover Police Department.

Before Officer Sexton could be appointed to his new position under this grant, a replacement was needed to fill the position which he would be vacating. The replacement officer was selected on January 1, 1978, and Officer Sexton officially began his duties as Crime Prevention Officer as of that date.

The Crime Prevention Officer's initial efforts included a city-wide information and education program and the implementation of a Neighborhood Watch Program. In January he began a vigorous campaign of public appearances to lecture on the program. For that first month he presented talks to the following civic groups: the Information and Referral Center of Strafford County, the Dover Housing Authority, Mineral and Whittier Parks Security Patrol and the Crime Prevention Committee of the Dover Exchange Club. He also spoke to Honeywell Protection Services Company and Prudential Insurance Company. In addition, he lectured to students at Dover Junior High School, and reached approximately 160,000 listeners in community service presentations on Manchester and Portsmouth radio broadcasts.

The public relations and educational campaign was continued in February with talks being given to eight groups and organizations. The overall objective of the community awareness campaign is to explain facets of crime prevention to as many people as possible. Officer Sexton's intention was to not only reach as many people as possible on a personal basis, but to enlist the aid of these groups in reaching the maximum number of citizens. In addition to the personal appearances, the Crime Prevention Officer established a regular column in the two local newspapers in the area.

In April, 1978, when the project was monitored, a project then being

implemented was the Neighborhood Watch Program. This involves getting the residents of a street, block or neighborhood together to explain the program and its benefits. A group captain is selected whose responsibility is to be the central point of contact in that area. People are directed to contact the captain when they are planning to be away for an appreciable length of time. A neighbor or neighbors are then notified, and requested to keep close surveillance on the property, collect mail and newspapers and to immediately contact the Police Department on an emergency line if anything of a suspicious nature occurs. Persons in the neighborhood receive instructions from the Crime Prevention Officer on how to minimize the opportunity for burglary under normal situations, and also while they are away. As of April 20, 1978, two such programs were in effect, with three more in the process of formation. Each family who joins the program is to be given a form listing the name, address, home and business phone, children's names, and car license number of each member of the neighborhood team. The block captain and his alternates are also identified on the form.

Another program which has been implemented is the Security Inspections Program. The Crime Prevention Officer receives a police report on each burglary which occurs in Dover. Each victim is then contacted and the Crime Prevention Officer offers to come to the home and make a security inspection which includes recommendations to maximize the security of the premises. In his education campaign he also solicits requests from residences and businesses for routine security inspections.

Following initial assessment of the city's needs, the Crime Prevention Officer expected to develop a formal Crime Prevention Plan with quantifiable and measureable goals and objectives. Included would be: entire coverage of the city by the Neighborhood Watch Program, an alarm ordinance, shoplifting, assault, robbery, senior citizens and identification programs.

During the first week of May, 1978, Officer Sexton resigned his position with the Dover Police Department to accept a similar position elsewhere. Police Chief Reynolds selected Officer Michael Murphy to replace Officer Sexton as the Crime Prevention Officer; the change was effective on May 10, 1978. Officer Murphy is a two and a half year veteran of the Dover Police Department. Prior to his employment with the department he was a Special Agent with the Office of Special Investigation in the United States Air Force. He holds an Associates Degree in General Studies from the University of New Hampshire and expects to receive his Bachelor's Degree in Criminology in the near future. Since assuming his present duties he has attended the Texas Crime Prevention Institute and graduated from their course in July, 1978. As was the case with Officer Sexton, Officer Murphy is assigned no additional duties with the department, except as may be required in emergency situations.

One of Officer Murphy's initial efforts was directed toward the Neighborhood Watch Program implemented by his predecessor. At the time the project was monitored in April, Officer Sexton reported that two neighborhoods had each initiated a watch program, with three additional neighborhoods planning to follow. At the time of this writing only one active Neighborhood Watch is in effect. Officer Murphy is now attempting to determine the reasons why this aspect of the Crime Prevention Program has regressed. The officer relates that he has scheduled meetings with Dover's residents to determine the problems that apparently exist. At this time he indicated that he has identified seven groups which may potentially band in the watch program.

Officer Murphy continues the active involvement in the information program initiated by Sexton. A unique feature in this area is the taped "Crime Watch" program which is aired regularly over cable television in the Dover

area. This is a five to fifteen minute segment involving interviews and question and answer sessions with selected personalities within the criminal justice system. Since its implementation in October, 1978, the program has been well received by the public.

Officer Murphy has also instituted monthly visits to housing areas for the elderly. In this effort he discusses the problems of vandalism which are high in incidence in such areas. By simply explaining the procedures to report such crimes, and the fact that the reporting person can remain anonymous, the incidence of such crimes has been virtually eliminated in one particular area due to the increase in reporting of the crimes. The Crime Prevention Officer is continuing his attack on vandalism by lecturing to local civic and fraternal groups, volunteer probation officers and the Dover Town Board of Trade (DTBT). He was influential in getting the DTBT to present monetary awards to persons supplying information leading to convictions in crimes of vandalism.

Also since October, Officer Murphy has been active in conducting security inspections in local banks. Some of these have disclosed weaknesses in the bank's security training programs for their personnel. This problem is now being addressed by those particular banks.

Other areas in which Officer Murphy is active include crime prevention lectures at local schools, shoplifting lectures for area merchants, regular segments on two local radio stations and surveys of homes and business establishments to determine security requirements.

In addition to the functions enumerated above, Officer Murphy is available in his office as much as possible to discuss crime prevention matters with citizens, either in person or over the phone.

As a result of this project, Dover Police Department records indicate that reported burglaries have decreased since July, 1978 when compared with

the same months of the previous year. Prior to July the records indicated an increase of these crimes compared with 1977. This was anticipated by Chief Reynolds and is attributed to the increased awareness of the citizens and merchants and reflects that crimes that were heretofore going unreported are now being reported. The fact that the present trend indicates a decrease in these crimes attests to the value of the program.

Administratively, this project is complying with federal and state requirements. Progress reports and financial reports have been submitted in a timely manner. The quality of the progress reports reflects the interest of the Dover Police Department. In addition, reports on the conduct of the program are submitted regularly by the Crime Prevention Officer to Chief Reynolds and are a valuable management tool for assessing the progress and worth of the program.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was clearly evident to the evaluator that the Crime Prevention Program in Dover is fulfilling the objectives set forth in the grant application. Both Officers Sexton and Murphy have conducted the program in an energetic and systematic manner. The success of the program has been reflected in the crime statistics; the acid test of any such undertaking. In order to continue the crime prevention effort initiated in Dover, it is recommended that this Commission favorably consider renewal funding for the second year in accordance with established Commission policy.



END