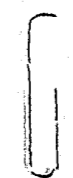98352

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
Bureau of Justice Assistance

PROGRAM BRIEF

Community Crime Prevention

PREPARED IN CONJUNCTION WITH
REGULATIONS IMPLEMENTING THE
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FEBRUARY 1985

PROGRAM BRIEF

Information Guide for the Development
of Crime Prevention Programs

COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION

CONTENTS OF THIS BRIEF

I. INTRODUCTION

Community crime prevention is citizens joining with law enforcement officials to take on the responsibility to insure the safety of their homes, work places, and neighborhoods.

A recent Gallup Poll shows the popularity of these programs. One in six Americans lives in a community that has an organized, volunteer anticrime program.

"Neighborhood Watch," with ten million participants, is perhaps the best known community crime prevention project. But it is only one type of activity. Citizens are engaging in a whole array of activities designed to meet particular crime problems and the needs of their community.

Federal Role in Program Development

The community crime prevention movement received major impetus from the Federal Government in the 1970's through the support of a number of national initiatives to spur and provide assistance to citizen involvement activities.

For the past several years, the most visible crime prevention initiative has been sponsored by the Office of Justice Assistance, Research, and Statistics. It features a trench-coated dog named McGruff and is a public education campaign backed by the Crime Prevention Coalition, and conducted in cooperation with The Advertising Council, Inc., and the National Crime Prevention Council. As a result of this program, about 30 million people report that they have learned something or taken a preventive action to protect themselves, their families, and their communities against crime.

Benefits

Many communities attest to the difference a crime prevention program can make. For example, in Detroit, Michigan, "Neighborhood Watch" has reduced burglaries 62%, and all crimes by 55% in three years in a 4,200 block area covered by 200,000 volunteers. Other cities, counties, and towns have reported similar results, and many law enforcement professionals, including the Director of the FBI, point to citizen crime prevention activities as an important factor in curbing crime rates.

II. KEY PROGRAM FEATURES

Partnership

Community crime prevention projects may be initiated by either law enforcement or by community organizations, but both must be actively involved in the effort. A crime prevention program is more likely to be effective and durable if it builds strong support in the neighborhood and the police department; starts with existing community organizations; and establishes linkages not only between law enforcement and residents, but also among other neighborhood organizations, service groups, and city and county agencies.

Targeting

Community crime prevention projects must be targeted to meet the needs and problems of specific communities or neighborhoods and to reflect the differing factors contributing to crime and the fear of crime. Targeting means paying attention to who lives in the neighborhood, its physical makeup, what the crime problem is, and how best to approach it. It means gathering and analyzing information about the neighborhood and its crime problem, including the concerns of the people who live and work there, and choosing a program and activities that fit the local situation.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the key ingredient in virtually every sustained crime prevention effort. They are essential to the most widely used crime prevention tactics (such as "Neighborhood Watch") and play a key role in project operations. Volunteering is the central means of sharing responsibility for crime prevention.

"Neighborhood Watch"

"Neighborhood Watch" is one of the best programs to involve citizens in crime prevention. Under this program, citizens serve as the eyes and ears of law enforcement, watch an area, and report suspicious activity. Watches can be organized at the block or neighborhood level, or even jurisdiction-wide. They can be used for apartments, businesses, and single-family residential areas. Watch programs are frequently combined with home security surveys and "Operation ID". Security surveys are inspections of a home or place of business and its surroundings -- doors, windows, locks, lighting, concealing shrubbery, or entryways -- to identify ways to increase safety and reduce the chances of break-ins. "Operation ID" is a tactic for marking valuable personal property by engraving it with an identification number. A window sticker warns thieves that the property can be traced.

"Neighborhood Watch," together with security surveys and "Operation ID," is at the heart of most successful community crime prevention programs because it is effective in dealing with a crime usually high on the list of citizens' concerns -- burglary. Together, these activities make it harder and riskier for burglars.

Other Tactics

"Neighborhood Watch," along with security surveys and "Operation ID," is the foundation of community crime prevention programs, but it is only a start. Targeting, as stated above, means that crime prevention programs need to be tailored specifically to local needs and problems. Other activities that have proven successful include:

- **Citizen Patrols**: Resident patrols report crimes and suspicious actions. Their presence helps reduce fear of crime and return public areas to the use of residents. Patrols may be either by radio-equipped vehicle patrols or by pedestrians. Organizations in high-rise apartment buildings can set up lobby guards, sitting patrols, or stairway patrols. Volunteer patrol members only report crimes. They do not intercede personally.

- **Escort Services**: Escort Services attempt to reduce both fear of and vulnerability to crime. Trained volunteers may accompany or drive senior citizens to collect and cash checks, pay rent, shop, or go to the doctor. In some areas, teenagers have participated in escort programs for the elderly. Escort services also can be provided for others who are at-risk or who fear being victimized, including children.

- **Block Homes**: "Block Homes" (also called Safe Homes or McGruff Houses) provide refuge for children or others who feel threatened. Trained, volunteer participants display a distinctive window sign, notify parents and/or law enforcement when someone needs help, and offer comfort until help arrives.

- **Neighborhood Clean-ups**: A cleaner neighborhood discourages crime and disorder. It signals an attentive and concerned community. Organized community projects to clean up the neighborhood boost morale, build communities, and make people want to use the outdoor space more.

- **Public Education**: Certain activities and public education efforts (e.g. crime prevention fairs, audio and/or visual presentations, pamphlets, presentations to civic groups, schools, and others) increase crime awareness and familiarize citizens with crime prevention techniques.

III. IMPLEMENTATION LESSONS AND ISSUES

Gathering Information

- Determine the concerns of the people of a neighborhood. Involve them in determining priority problems and ways to deal with those problems.

- Collect information about the make-up of an area; who lives there and its physical environment. These factors are important in deciding what to do. For example, what might be appropriate for a neighborhood of mostly elderly, retired people probably would not work in a young singles area.

- Consider other factors such as the attitude of the community toward law enforcement; the strength of mutual concern and involvement; the confidence of the residents in the future of the area.

Law enforcement statistics, victimization and attitude surveys, observation, and just talking to people, all are ways to gather information.

Building Community Support

Every community crime prevention program needs the commitment and involvement of residents. The participation of citizen volunteers is critically important. To build support, it is important to increase public awareness about crime prevention through door-to-door canvassing, community meetings, the media, or some other means. Motivating citizens and organizing a program sometimes may be more difficult in those areas most in need of a crime prevention effort. Communities that lack cohesion or social integration or are inhabited by persons with weak ties to the community, and hence less stake in its future, pose particular problems for crime prevention organizers.

Building Law Enforcement Support

The role of law enforcement in community crime prevention programs varies. Many departments support such programs and many implement them directly. Whatever the specific role, law enforcement cooperation is essential to the effectiveness of community programs, and community support is essential to the success of law enforcement-sponsored programs. The creation of working relationships between law enforcement and the community helps them both meet mutual needs, accomplish common goals, and make the most of scarce resources.

Effective working relationships seldom arise by themselves. For law enforcement agencies, the first step is to find out who in the community has the know-how and the interest to get a program started. Police and sheriffs' departments must be careful to establish the relationship as one of helping, not co-opting. Similarly, community organizations should stress their interest in cooperating with law enforcement, rather than merely demanding increased services.

Starting with Existing Organizations

Experience has shown that most sustained anti-crime efforts begin with existing community organizations. These groups tend to have a broad focus, and anti-crime activities become part of their agenda because crime is perceived as a problem. Existing organizations with strong community support have established structures and communication systems for informing, motivating, and organizing citizens. Existing organizations tend to be more durable and help sustain crime prevention activities over time.

Crime prevention is strengthened in a number of ways by becoming part of an ongoing organization that addresses other issues besides crime. First, it gains credibility. Second, it is able to share staff and resources. Third, it is more likely to have broader participation. Finally, it gains an enhanced capacity to mobilize resources. The volunteer and/or staff resources developed for other issues can be applied to planning and starting anti-crime efforts.

Law Enforcement Crime Prevention Programs

Developing a crime prevention program structure in law enforcement agencies entails different questions than for community organizations. It may involve changing the priorities of the agency. It may be necessary to convince officers that crime prevention is worthwhile. It requires different skills, i.e., person-to-person skills of communicating and organizing. It requires the full support of the law enforcement agency head to the philosophy of neighborhood crime prevention through community involvement.

Keeping People Involved

Whether a crime prevention program is based in the police or sheriff's department or in a community organization, it can be effective only as long as neighborhood participation is maintained. "Neighborhood Watch" signs and "Operation ID" stickers do not prevent crime. These outward signs may have a deterrent effect initially, but if they are not backed up by citizen awareness, it will take little time for criminals to determine that no one is really watching the neighborhood.

Crime prevention by itself is difficult to maintain. People become bored with watching and patrolling. Success breeds apathy. Crime prevention efforts must have other activities and events structured into them that maintain interest and involvement. Techniques may include awards and recognition ceremonies for volunteers, community events, advisory committees, and neighborhood meetings. The most basic technique is to recontact watch captains or other activity leaders.

Resources

Costs depend on the scope of program activities and the availability of other resources. Crime prevention programs can and should take maximum advantage of existing resources and should try to reach and involve business, religious institutions, labor unions, schools, civic organizations, and others. These groups can become sources of volunteers, donated skills or facilities, small contributions, and contacts. A governing or advisory board may be the most effective way to mobilize these resources. Boards can be a useful means to recognize important contributors, make linkages with other programs, and create communication channels.

Some activities, like "Neighborhood Watch," can be established with only small amounts of funds, as they rely almost totally on the volunteer participation of residents. However, there are advantages to having a core of paid staff with skills in organization and communications. Staff roles should be limited so as to not diminish the volunteer nature of the program and the sense of ownership and participation. Nevertheless, staff can help insure continuity and durability in program operations.

IV. MEASURING PERFORMANCE

It is important to keep track of the crime prevention activities being carried out, and to find out if the activities are having the intended effect. Monitoring and evaluating crime prevention activities helps mobilize resources by documenting what is happening; helps the program make better use of existing resources; helps improve the program; helps assure program continuity; and helps identify any unintended consequences of the activities.

The following are some items that should be monitored for the different program tactics previously described:

"Neighborhood Watch" (Including "Operation ID" and Security Surveys)	—	the number of blocks organized for "Neighborhood Watch."
	—	the number of homes receiving security surveys.
	—	the number of crime prevention meetings held; number and composition of residents attending.
	—	the number of households borrowing property marking equipment.
Citizen Patrols	—	the number and kind of patrols established.
	—	the numbers of blocks covered.
	—	the number of volunteer participants.
Escort Services	—	the number and kind of escort services established.
	—	the number of escort runs provided.
	—	the number of users.
	—	the number of volunteer participants.
Block Homes	—	the number and kind of block homes established.
	—	the number of users.
	—	the number of volunteer participants.
Neighborhood Clean-ups	—	the number of clean-ups conducted d the blocks covered.
	—	the number of volunteer participants.
Public Education	—	the number of requests for crime prevention information.
	—	the number of crime prevention presentations requested/completed.

This list does not include everything that could usefully be monitored, but it is illustrative of the kinds of record-keeping that a good crime prevention program manager should undertake so that he or she knows what the program is doing, and can report this information to others.

Evaluation of program impact should be an integral part of a community crime prevention project. Evaluation is concerned with whether or not the program is having the intended effect. Evaluation frequently requires extensive data collection and analysis and, because of the many difficulties in assessing impact, may require specialized assistance. Evaluation should examine the impact of the program on the targeted crimes and on the fear of crime in the targeted community.

V. SOURCES FOR INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

A. Selected Documents

1. U.S. Department of Justice, National Criminal Justice Reference Service; "Partnerships for Neighborhood Crime Prevention"; Judith D. Feins; Washington, D.C.; January 1983; NCJ #87389.

   A practical guidebook for both law enforcement and citizens on issues and practices in neighborhood crime prevention. It deals with targeting programs to specific problems and neighborhoods, the range of tactics often used, organizing techniques, resources, and evaluation. It is based primarily on current practice, with six programs examined in depth.

2. U.S. Department of Justice, National Criminal Justice Reference Service; "Topical Bibliography: Community Crime Prevention Programs."

   Includes 224 document abstracts on state and local community crime prevention programs in the NCJRS collection. Examples of specific measures include operation identification, block watch, citizen patrols, educational programs, and citizen and law enforcement cooperative activities.

3. U.S. Department of Justice, National Criminal Justice Reference Service; "Community Crime Prevention, Seattle, Washington: Exemplary Project"; Abt Associates; 1977; NCJ #42383.

   The above are available from: National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) P.O. Box 6000 Rockville, Maryland 20850 301/251-5500

B. Selected National Training and Technical Assistance Sources

1. American Association of Retired Persons, Criminal Justice Services Program Department, 1909 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20049, (202)728-4363.

   Provides crime prevention training manuals and slide/tape presentations as a public service, and offers a structured course on helping law enforcement officers deal more effectively with senior citizens.

2. National Crime Prevention Council, 805 15th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005, (202)393-7141.

   Manages the "Take A Bite Out Of Crime" campaign ("McGruff," The Crime Dog) which includes public service advertising, follow-up education materials, and technical assistance. The program also provides materials and helps organizations use and build on the national campaign. Through its work with the 90-member Crime Prevention Coalition, the Council has an extensive network and serves as a referral agent.

   The Council uses computer technology to record and index thousands of crime prevention programs and resources across the nation. This service is part of NCPC's ongoing effort as secretariat to the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign and Coalition, and can be contacted directly at (202)737-4603.

3. National Crime Prevention Institute, School of Justice Administration, Shelby Campus, University of Louisville, Louisville, Ky. 40292, (502)588-6987.

   Offers an extensive array of training courses for law enforcement personnel, community volunteers, and others; and serves as a clearing-house for crime prevention books, films, and brochures.

4. National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Box 6000, Rockville, Maryland 20850, (301)251-5500.

   Makes referrals to programs and documents, conducts literature searches, and provides bibliographies.

5. National Sheriffs' Association, "National Neighborhood Watch," 1450 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, (703)836-7827.

   Provides guidelines and materials for implementation of local neighborhood watch programs.

6. Texas Crime Prevention Institute, Institute of
   Criminal Justice Studies, Southwest Texas State
   University, San Marcos, Texas 78666-4610,
   (512)245-3031.

   Conducts crime prevention courses for the Texas law
   enforcement community and crime prevention
   practitioners nationwide. Distributes brochures,
   course materials, and films.

C. **State Programs**

A number of states offer assistance to local crime
prevention groups through state crime prevention programs
and associations. Their services range from distributing
crime prevention brochures and other materials to
offering training and technical assistance. Listed below
are a number of those state programs.

State of Arizona, Department of Public Safety
California Crime Prevention Center
Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, Department of Local Affairs
Connecticut Law Enforcement Crime Prevention Association
Idaho Crime Prevention Association
Idaho Crime Prevention Office, Department of Law Enforcement
Illinois Attorney General's Crime Prevention Council
Iowa Crime Prevention Center, Department of Public Safety
Louisiana Crime Prevention Association
Maryland Crime Prevention Association
Maryland Crime Watch, Maryland Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
Michigan Office of Criminal Justice
Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice
New Jersey Crime Prevention Officers Association
State of New York, Office of Crime Prevention
State of North Carolina, Department of Crime Control and Crime Prevention Office
Ohio Division of Crime Prevention, Department of Economic and
  Community Development
Ohio Crime Prevention Association
Crime Prevention Association of Oregon
Oregon Crime Watch, Oregon Police Standards and Training
Pennsylvania Crime Prevention Officers' Association
Pennsylvania Crime Watch, Commission on Crime and Delinquency
South Carolina Governor's Crime Watch Program
Texas Crime Prevention Association
Utah Crime Prevention Council
Virgin Islands Law Enforcement Planning Commission, Crime Prevention Project
Virginia Crime Prevention Association
Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Criminal Justice Services
Washington Crime Watch, Office of Attorney General
Wisconsin Council on Criminal Justice

D. **Federal Program Contact**

Community Crime Prevention Program
Bureau of Justice Assistance
Office of Justice Programs
U.S Department of Justice
633 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20531
(202)724-5974

VI. **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

During implementation of the program described in this
Program Brief, sponsoring agencies or organizations should
find it useful to track and maintain certain program
information in order to provide some indication of program
performance. While basic in nature, this information will
not only provide an indication of program progress and
performance, but will also serve as a benchmark for continued
program implementation and allow for comparison with similar
program efforts in other jurisdictions. Attached is a
suggested reporting form listing several performance
indicators which should be helpful in tracking program
performance.

<u>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</u>
(Please type)

Program Category: Community Crime Prevention

Project I.D. No.:   _____ _____
                            (Limited to 10 characters)

Implementing Agency: _____ _____
Address: _____
                     _____
                     _____
                     _____

Report Date: ____/____/____

Period Covered: ____/____/____ through ____/____/____

Performance Indicators: In order to gather basic information
regarding project implementation, please provide responses to the
following performance indicators.

(1) Number of staff assigned to project:

(2) Total amount of Federal/non-Federal expenditures:

(3) Types of services provided and/or efforts undertaken, and
    number of each:

(A) Neighborhood Watch:

(B) Operation ID:

(C) Security surveys:

(D) Citizen patrols:

(E) Escort services:

(F) Block homes/safe houses:

(G) Neighborhood clean-ups:

(H) Public education:

(I) Other services/efforts:

(4) Number of volunteers who participated:

(5) Additional comments/information:

END