EVIDENCE-BASED CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAMS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Submitted to the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners and Criminal Justice Commission

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March, 2011
Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the following people for their support, guidance, and assistance throughout this project: Mr. Damir Kukec, Mr. Michael Rodriguez, Ms. Katherine Hatos, and Ms. Shahzia Hashmi. Their involvement was indispensible to the successful completion of this project and, for that, I am very grateful.
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1. Background and Objectives

The current fiscal crisis has led governments at all levels to reflect on their approaches to fighting crime. A decline in the revenues of local governments compels them to prioritize programs on the basis of their efficacy and cost effectiveness. A recent editorial in the Palm Beach Post (August 24th) stated that the pressure is on the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) to demonstrate that cherished programs, such as the youth empowerment centers, are effective in reducing crime. Research and evaluation allow funding to proceed by demonstrating program effectiveness. They also contribute to a more impartial and transparent way of arriving at funding decisions.

The present project involved a structured, scholarly literature review that was designed to achieve two objectives: 1) to assess the evidence underlying the key crime prevention programs and initiatives currently being funded by Palm Beach County; and, 2) to identify exemplary or promising programs that might be considered for implementation in the County. The ultimate goal was to provide evidence-based information that would inform crime policy, improve the operation of the criminal justice system, and reduce crime. Decisions taken on the project, including the selection of programs to be covered by the literature review, were made collaboratively with the Research and Planning Unit of the CJC.

In short, this review aimed to answer the question of “what works” in crime prevention and what is likely to work in Palm Beach County. This paper describes the methodology used in the structured literature review as the aim was to minimize the bias that frequently intrudes in literature reviews. The selection of materials for literature reviews, the material extracted from each work, and the methods used to assess the literature as a whole can easily be influenced by one’s prior expectations and beliefs. Therefore, a systematic approach is taken in the present
review. A critical aspect of this review is to distinguish between evaluations on the basis of their methodological rigor. While some program evaluations are true experiments with randomization (also known as randomized control trials), the vast majority use less rigorous methods. The more rigorous a study, the more reliable will be the conclusions of the evaluation. Hence, the greater the confidence will be that the program will be effective if implemented elsewhere. Thus, the weight given to the conclusion of an evaluation study must take into account the methodology applied. Methods for rating evaluation studies and for drawing conclusions across studies are presented below. The ultimate goal of the review is to facilitate the implementation of politically neutral and evidence-based crime prevention programming in Palm Beach County.
2. Varieties of Crime Prevention Programs

Just a few decades ago, the idea of crime prevention, for many, conjured up the image of a police officer visiting our primary school, occasionally accompanied by his canine “partner”. The officer would bond with the young students and impart various lessons, such as that of having a healthy suspicion of strangers or being vigilant while crossing the street. Before the officer left, he (police officers were all males in most jurisdictions) would mesmerize the children with offender “takedown” techniques mastered by the officer and his canine partner.

The field of crime prevention has evolved significantly over the last 30 years or so. However, even in the more distant past, most people routinely practiced some forms of crime prevention in their daily lives, from avoiding dimly lit streets and tough-looking neighborhood youth to locking the doors of homes and protecting the cash earned at work. Crime prevention is therefore not a new concept, although the scope of this field is much broader than the basic measures taken by much of the public.

Crime Prevention has been described as “any initiative or policy which reduces, avoids or eliminates victimization by crime or violence. It includes governmental and non-governmental initiatives to reduce fear of crime as well as lessen the impact of crime on victims” (Institute for the Prevention of Crime, 2010). Crime prevention encompasses a broad array of approaches, including:

1. **Developmental Crime Prevention** (also referred to as **Social Prevention**). Measures subsumed within this approach promote the well-being of people and encourage pro-social behavior through social, economic, health and educational measures, with a particular emphasis on children and youth. The goal is to intervene early in the lives of at-risk individuals and groups so as to forestall the development of crime and other behavioral problems later on (Homel, 2005). The focus is on risk and protective factors associated with criminal behavior, including personality factors, parental, peer, and school-related factors.
2. **Community or Locally-Based Crime Prevention.** This approach tackles the neighborhood conditions that influence offending and insecurity by drawing on the commitment and resources of community members. These efforts can range from organizing neighborhood watch programs to neighborhood revitalization efforts (e.g., Weed and Seed) and comprehensive programs that seek to improve a neighborhood’s cohesion and image (Schlossman et al., 1984).

3. **Situational Crime Prevention.** This approach seeks to prevent the occurrence of crimes by reducing opportunities for crime, increasing the risks of being apprehended, raising the level of effort required to commit crimes, and minimizing the benefits from crime. Included here are such measures as target hardening, access control, surveillance, and prevention through environmental design (Clarke, 1997). Situational crime prevention can be undertaken by members of the public, businesses, schools, and other facilities. It can be facilitated through a detailed analysis of a specific crime to determine the vulnerabilities of a specific target or site toward the end of developing customized countermeasures.

4. **Crime Prevention Through the Justice System.** Crime prevention measures may also originate from the justice system. Targeted law enforcement strategies may focus on specific crimes or on crime “hot spots”. Legal sanctions may have a deterrent effect and incarceration may exercise an incapacitation effect by removing offenders from society. In addition, interventions in custodial and community settings may be designed to change offender behavior and thereby prevent recidivism.

In the mid-1970s, Brantingham and Faust (1976) proposed that criminology should classify crime prevention in a manner similar to models of disease prevention adopted by the public health field. Thus, they distinguished between *primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention*. Primary prevention refers to those measures that alter the physical environment and social conditions in a way that makes the general population less likely to engage in crime. Examples include job creation programs, anti-discrimination policies, and altering the physical
environment to make it less attractive to crime (crime prevention through environmental design). Primary prevention is aimed at the population at large and also includes legal measures that act as a general deterrent to crime. Secondary prevention aims to identify and intervene in the lives of individuals or groups who are at an elevated risk of involvement in crime. High-crime neighborhoods may also be targeted. Programs may be home or school-based, provide for comprehensive neighborhood restructuring, or divert first-time offenders from the justice system. Tertiary prevention refers to all those strategies geared toward preventing the relapse of convicted offenders. Efforts to deter, incapacitate, and reform offenders are especially relevant here.

Regardless of the system adopted, classifying approaches to crime prevention can help identify gaps in a jurisdiction’s programs. Through such classification systems, we can also spot a potential overinvestment in one approach to crime prevention, signaling a possible ideological bias or vested interest in that approach.

There are literally hundreds of different crime prevention programs. For example, the Blueprints for Violence Prevention project at the University of Colorado has reviewed more than 800 programs in its efforts to identify Model and Promising programs (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, n.d.). In the mid-1990s, Lawrence Sherman and his colleagues at the University of Maryland reviewed over 500 program impact evaluations in order to identify “what works, what doesn’t, and what’s promising” (Sherman et al., 1997). As one further example, Professor Ronald Clarke of Rutgers University has, in several volumes, assembled dozens of examples of successful crime prevention practices, with a focus on situational prevention or strategies that combine situational and social prevention (Clarke, 1997; Clarke, 1994; Clarke, 1993).

Given the enormous number and types of programs, it is important to take stock of this large body of evidence as to the most effective and promising programs on an ongoing basis. The
present assessment of the most effective programs will shed light on the gaps that may exist in the programs funded in Palm Beach County. For example, are some areas being seriously underfunded? This review of the evidence can also identify those initiatives that might be considered for future implementation in the county.
3. Evidence-Based Crime Prevention

3.1 The Evidence-Based Movement

The idea of evidence-based programming or interventions is rooted in the medical field. Some trace the birth of the evidence-based movement to the establishment of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 1927 (Williams-Taylor, n.d.). The FDA is responsible for testing the efficacy and safety of medical treatments and drugs. A drug must be successfully tested in two randomized clinical trials before it is approved by the FDA and placed on the market by the manufacturer. Randomized clinical trials are needed in order to draw the conclusion that a treatment caused specific outcomes to occur. Without an evaluation that compares a group that received a treatment or intervention with another group that did not and without random assignment to these groups, one cannot determine with high confidence whether or not the program/intervention caused a significant change in those receiving the treatment.

The first randomized control study took place in 1948 when the effectiveness of streptomycin was assessed as a treatment for tuberculosis. By the 1960s, there were hundreds of randomized controlled trials and currently there are thousands running every day (Dodge, 2006). By the mid-1970s, there was a general pessimistic view in the social sphere that “nothing works.” This view emerged from research showing that many social programs were not having an impact on crime. Perhaps the most influential study promoting the “nothing works” view was a review of 231 evaluations of correctional treatment programs (Lipton et al., 1975). The tide began to turn in the early 1990s when evaluation research demonstrated that, in fact, several crime prevention and treatment programs did produce significant results. Today’s challenging fiscal environment underscores the importance of evidence-based programming as scarce resources make it more critical that ineffective programs that fail to have an impact be identified and replaced by those that do successfully prevent crime.
3.2 The UN Guidelines on Crime Prevention

In 2002, the United Nations drafted the following resolution on the prevention of crime (UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, 2002):

*There is clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime and victimization, but also promote community safety and contribute to the sustainable development of countries. Effective, responsible crime prevention enhances the quality of life of all citizens. It has long-term benefits in terms of reducing the costs associated with the formal criminal justice system, as well as other social costs that result from crime. Crime prevention offers opportunities for a humane and more cost-effective approach to the problems of crime.*

The UN Guidelines note that crime prevention strategies and programs should be based on a broad, multidisciplinary foundation of knowledge about crime problems, their numerous causes, and practices that are promising or demonstrated to be successful. According to the Guidelines, governments should facilitate knowledge-based crime prevention by:

(a) Providing the information necessary for communities to deal with crime problems;
(b) Supporting the generation of practically applicable knowledge that is scientifically reliable and valid;
(c) Disseminating that knowledge to researchers, policy makers, educators, and the wider community;
(d) Applying this knowledge in replicating successful interventions and developing new initiatives.

The UN guidelines add that those planning interventions should promote: a) a systematic analysis of crime problems at the local level; 2) interventions that are the most appropriate approach, that adapt to the local context, and that are efficient, effective, and sustainable; and 3) monitoring and evaluation of the intervention. With regard to evaluation, the UN Guidelines call for an understanding of what works and why. They also call for cost-benefit analyses to determine the value added by a program. Furthermore, they recommend an assessment of the
unintended, as well as intended, consequences of programs. One unintended adverse consequence might be the stigmatization of individuals or entire communities.

The UN guidelines essentially describe what evidence-based crime prevention is about—the development and implementation of programs based on a systematic assessment of its outcomes at other sites or in pilot projects, rather than a reliance on unsubstantiated beliefs about what works.

### 3.3 Why Evidence-Based Prevention Programming is Important

Hundreds of crime prevention programs have been implemented in the United States and many have not even been subject to the most basic evaluation. While programs are well-intentioned, very few of them are supported by evidence demonstrating their effectiveness (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, n.d.). Many assessments of programs are merely anecdotal in nature, while others lack independence as they are self-evaluations conducted by the agencies responsible for a program. Many crime prevention programs are implemented for political or ideological reasons. Political leaders, for example, may wish to appear to be tough on crime or concerned about youth gangs or drug abuse. Others may have a strong ideological belief in certain forms of crime prevention, whether these involve a law enforcement crackdown on drug dealing in a neighborhood or mentoring and after school programs for youth. Still others believe that policy and practices should be based on “common sense”, hunches or “feelings in the gut”.

Research has shown, however, that common sense beliefs we hold are not always supported by statistical information or other data. For example, many people believe that the death penalty deters homicide. For them, it is simply logical that the most severe penalty will lead those bent on killing to pause as a result of the consequences of carrying out this most extreme of acts. Most criminological research, however, fails to support this notion. For example, countries and states with capital punishment have not been shown to be less prone to homicide than those without such a penalty. In fact, year after year, death penalty states have higher murder rates than those without a death penalty (Death Penalty Information Center, 2010).
There can be enormous fiscal and social costs of pursuing policies that are based on unsubstantiated beliefs. Programs that are ineffective in meeting their stated outcomes collectively cost billions of dollars to American taxpayers. Even more problematic has been the finding that some programs may actually harm the target population. For example, a systematic review of the “Scared Straight” program, which takes at-risk youth or delinquents on prison tours in order to instill fear and deter them from future criminality, found that program participants were almost twice as likely to offend or reoffend than were controls (Petrosino et al., 2003).

The pre-eminent aim of evidence-based crime prevention is to develop a rational basis for crime prevention initiatives, by limiting political and ideological influences, as well as the role of vested interest. The aim is to minimize bias in the evaluation of programs so that policy is based on a careful assessment of the empirical evidence as to “what works”.

It is important to note that the notion of an evidence-based program is not an “all or nothing” concept. Crime prevention programs that appear to achieve certain desired outcomes are best viewed on a continuum. Sections 3.5-3.6 below discuss how the rigor of individual evaluations and multiple evaluations can be rated. Most programs fall somewhere on the “evidence-based” continuum and those delivering the program might consider more rigorous evaluations so it may eventually be listed among model or promising programs.

3.4 Types of Validity

Petrosino (2000: 635) notes that “An evidence-based approach requires that the results of rigorous evaluation be rationally integrated into decisions about interventions by policymakers and practitioners alike.” According to Shadish et al. (2002), methodological quality is based on four considerations: statistical conclusion validity, internal validity, construct validity, and external validity. Farrington (2003) adds that descriptive validity, the overall quality of the reporting of a study’s data, could be a fifth criterion in the determination of the methodological quality of evaluation research. Ultimately, validity refers to the correctness of inferences about cause and effect” (Shadish et al., 2002).
**Statistical conclusion validity** is concerned with whether the intervention (the program) and the outcome (e.g., recidivism or crime rates) are related. The main concern with regard to this type of validity is insufficient statistical power to detect the effect (e.g., because of a small sample size) and the use of statistical techniques that are inappropriate.

**Internal validity refers** to how well a study clearly shows that an intervention (e.g., mentoring) had an effect on an outcome (e.g., delinquency). Delinquency rates may be influenced by many factors other than the mentoring program. Studies must incorporate a control condition to determine the outcome in the absence of the intervention.

Threats to internal validity include (Shadish et al., 2002):

1. Selection: pre-existing differences between the experimental and control groups account for the effect, rather than the intervention itself.
2. History: the effect is caused by some event occurring at the same time as the intervention.
3. Maturation: the effect is due to human development (i.e., aging), rather than the intervention.
4. Instrumentation: the effect is produced by a change in the outcome measure (e.g., surveys are used to measure crime following a program rather than official crime statistics).
5. Testing: the pretest measurement itself changes the result in the posttest, as participants learn how to improve their scores in the test rather than develop some underlying skill.
6. Regression to the mean: a natural fluctuation, rather than an intervention, leads crime rates to decline in a high-crime area.
7. Attrition/differential attrition: the effect is caused by the loss of participating individuals from the pre-to post-intervention measures or due to a different rate of attrition in the experimental and control groups.

**Construct validity** refers to the adequacy of operational definitions and measurement of the theoretical constructs that underlie the intervention and the outcome. Thus, in the evaluation of the impact on violence of a program teaching non-violent conflict resolution skills, the issue of construct validity asks whether the program actually targeted and improved these skills and
whether arrests or charges are a valid measure of violence. Therefore, did the intervention faithfully impart these conflict resolution skills according to some accepted protocol (i.e., extent of treatment fidelity) and how valid and reliable are official measures of violence?

**External validity** refers to how well the effect of an intervention is generalizable to other settings and individuals. External validity can best be established by conducting systematic reviews of a number of studies and observing the extent to which an intervention continues to exercise an effect upon an outcome (e.g., delinquency) in a variety of circumstances or settings.

Evaluation studies using experimental (randomized and non-randomized) and quasi-experimental research designs are those that can best achieve a high degree of internal, construct, and statistical conclusion validity. The randomized controlled experiment is considered the “Gold Standard” in evaluation research designs (Farrington and Welsh, 2005). This type of evaluation design involves the random assignment of subjects to treatment (those receiving the treatment/program) and control conditions (those not receiving the treatment). Random assignment, especially where the sample size is sufficient (a minimum of 50 units is recommended), maximizes the likelihood that the treatment and control groups are equivalent prior to the intervention on relevant variables that may also be related to the outcome (e.g., age, gender, social class, criminal history). As a result of randomization, differences between the groups observed following the intervention can be attributed to the intervention with a maximum of confidence.

### 3.5 Assessment of Research Evidence

Apart from the importance of identifying studies that utilize high-quality research designs, it is also critical to apply the most rigorous methods in assessing the entire body of available research evidence. Welsh (2005) has identified five methods in reviewing evidence: the single study, narrative, vote-count, systematic, and meta-analytic.

In the **single study review method**, one high-profile study is cited to make sweeping generalizations about the value of a policy or program. Two examples of the influence of
individual studies are the Perry Preschool program in Michigan and the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment on the use of mandatory arrest in spousal assault cases (Schweinhart et al., Sherman and Berk, 1984). In both cases, advocates seized upon dramatic findings in promoting policy reforms; however, in both cases, subsequent research did not uphold the conclusions of these path-breaking studies. Regardless of its quality, a single study cannot serve as the basis for major policy changes.

The narrative review method involves a description of the literature without a systematic method to assess the overall findings. This review method lacks a systematic search strategy, resulting in the possible exclusion of important studies and the inclusion of studies that may lack rigor. Researchers may even select studies based on their familiarity with them. As a result, bias is a major concern with this methodology.

The vote-count method is a more sophisticated approach to reviewing the evidence in relation to crime prevention or other programs. The vote-count method involves the quantification of the literature by, for example, tallying studies that demonstrate a program’s effectiveness versus those pointing in the opposite direction. The weakness of this approach is that all studies, regardless of sample size and quality, carry the same weight. However, one can incorporate a scheme whereby one rates studies on the basis of their rigor (see section 3.6 below).

Systematic reviews are highly transparent reviews of the literature in which every step of the research process must be very clear, non-partisan, and objective so as to maximize the likelihood that different individuals conducting the review would draw the same conclusions. Some of the critical components of systematic reviews include (Campbell Collaboration, n.d.):

(a) Explicit objectives. The aim(s) of the review is clear and precise.

(b) Explicit eligibility criteria. The investigators provide specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. Thus, what are the minimum methodological requirements? Are there other reasons for
rejecting a study other than that it failed to meet these requirements (e.g., language or country in which a study was conducted). Scales that rate the rigor of an evaluation, such as the SMS described above, can be applied to determine whether studies meet the minimum requirements established. Some reviews of the literature may establish very demanding inclusion criteria, such as the requirement that only randomized experiments be considered. This requirement is more common in the field of medicine where clinical trials are standard in the approval of treatments. In the social sciences, such standards would likely reduce the body of evidence included in a review to an unacceptably small number. The eligibility criteria may also include the population targeted in a program (e.g., youth may need to be targeted for a study to be considered). Also, to be eligible, a study may need to evaluate specific interventions and utilize specified outcome measures. All of the inclusion and exclusion criteria must be explicitly stated in the final report.

(c) The document search strategy is designed so as to minimize bias. Today, there are so many possible scholarly sources and databases. Searches of the Internet can yield almost an infinite combination of relevant works using an unlimited number of keywords. In order to minimize bias and to maintain a high level of transparency, reviewers must explicitly reveal their sources. Are works limited to peer-reviewed academic journals or is the “gray literature” included? How are materials located (i.e., what electronic databases are used)? Are articles in foreign languages included? By making the search strategy explicit, gaps in coverage can be identified.

(d) Each study ought to be screened according to the criteria established, with exclusions justified. Researchers should be prepared to make available to readers a full listing of all excluded studies, along with the justifications for exclusion.

(e) Once all eligible studies have been selected for the review, all data relevant to the objectives of the review should be carefully extracted from each document and prepared for analysis using acceptable software (e.g., SPSS, Excel). Missing information may need to be obtained from the report’s author(s).

(f) Where appropriate, a quantitative analysis of the literature should be conducted. If the literature permits, a meta-analysis can be undertaken. The use of meta-analysis may be precluded by a small number of studies, heterogeneity across studies, or different units of analysis (i.e., a mix of community-based and individual-based studies).
(g) The final report of a systematic review is structured and detailed, permitting the reader to understand each phase of the study, the decisions that were made, and the conclusions reached.

A **meta-analysis** is a quantitative analysis of the results of prior research studies (Lipsey and Wilson, 2001). Meta-analysis yields a quantitative summary of evaluation studies and requires a reasonable number of intervention studies that are similar enough to be grouped together. This form of analysis provides the average size of the effect of a program across the studies. One of the key features of a meta-analysis is that it takes into account the size of a study. The effect size of each study is weighted according to that study’s sample size. Therefore, all studies are not treated equally and larger studies carry a greater weight than studies with small samples.

Meta-analyses are a transparent and quite objective review method that can handle a large body of literature that may otherwise overwhelm reviewers. They are more limited in their ability to summarize complex studies containing a variety of outcomes or a body of literature in which outcome measures are highly divergent.

### 3.6 Rating Methodological Rigor

A number of research teams and institutes have developed systems to rate the power of studies on a form of hierarchy or continuum. These systems can then be adopted for one of the following purposes:

1. To determine whether studies meet the minimum requirements for inclusion in a literature review.
2. To weight studies in terms of importance in assessing the literature pertaining to programs.
3. To classify programs as exemplary or effective, with the assumption that programs can only be classified as exemplary if they have been subject to a highly rigorous evaluation.
3.6.1 The Maryland Scientific Methods Scale

Perhaps the best known method for rating evaluation studies in the crime prevention field has been the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale (SMS) developed by Sherman and his colleagues (1997). The SMS rates the internal validity of evaluation studies on a simple five-point scale and is based on the seminal work of methodologists Cook and Campbell (1979). The goal was to create a scale that could easily be understood by academics, policymakers, and practitioners. The scale is as follows, beginning with the least sophisticated evaluation method:

Level 1: Studies demonstrating a correlation between a prevention program and a measure of crime at one point in time. For example, one might observe that areas with a Youth Empowerment Center have lower crime rates than areas without such a center. Such a design fails to rule out most threats to internal validity and also fails to establish causal order. The lack of any controls makes it impossible to conclude that the lower crime rate is due to the centers, as opposed to a multitude of other possible factors.

Level 2: Measures of crime before and after the program, with no control condition. An example would be the observation that crime decreased following the implementation of a Youth Empowerment Center. This design establishes causal order (i.e., the decrease in crime followed the program) but once again fails to rule out many threats to internal validity. Thus, other factors coinciding with the program may have produced the observed decline in crime. Level 1 and 2 designs were considered inadequate by Cook and Campbell (1979).

Level 3: Measures of crime before and after the program in experimental and comparable control conditions. For example, suppose crime decreased following the establishment of a youth center but there was no decrease in crime in a comparable control neighborhood. Cook and Campbell considered this as the minimum interpretable design. The design eliminates many threats to internal validity, including history, maturation/trends, and instrumentation. One remaining problem with the design centers on selection effects due to the non-equivalence of the
experimental and control conditions. Thus, there is no assurance that the neighborhoods being compared were similar in crime prior to the implementation of the program.

Level 4: Measures of crime before and after the program in multiple experimental and control units, controlling for other variables that influence crime. There would be a careful matching of sites with a program (e.g., youth empowerment centers) with those neighborhoods not covered by such a program to maximize the equivalence of experimental and control areas with regard to the presence of violence, drug trafficking, and so on. This design would better control for selection biases, due to this careful matching.

Level 5: Random assignment of program and control conditions to units (e.g., neighborhoods receiving empowerment centers and those not receiving the centers). Random assignment is the “gold standard” in evaluation because it best eliminates selection biases when the sample size is sufficient. While randomized control studies have the highest internal validity, randomization is often impractical because programs, such as the youth empowerment centers, are frequently implemented in areas with the most serious crime problems. This fact also makes it difficult to achieve equivalent control units through matching (Level 4).

While the SMS was designed exclusively to rate the internal validity of evaluation studies, Sherman and his colleagues (1997) also rated projects on statistical conclusion validity and construct validity. For statistical validity, they addressed three issues: 1) whether the statistical analysis was appropriate; 2) whether the sample size was large enough to allow for statistical power; and 3) whether the response rate or differential attrition were problematic. With regard to construct validity, the key issues revolved around the reliability and validity of the outcome measure.

With regard to external validity, programs were classified by Sherman et al. into one of four categories: what works, what does not work, what is promising, and what is unknown.

What works. Programs coded as working had at least two level 3 to level 5 evaluations showing statistically significant results pointing to program effectiveness. The preponderance of all available evidence must also point to program effectiveness.
**What does not work.** These are programs that fail to prevent crime. Programs classified as not working must have at least two level 3 to level 5 evaluations with tests of statistical significance demonstrating ineffectiveness. The preponderance of the available evidence must also point to program ineffectiveness.

**What is promising.** In this category are programs that have some empirical support; however, the support is as yet insufficient to justify confidence in them. Specifically, Sherman and his colleagues coded programs as promising if they were found to be effective in tests of statistical significance in one level 3 to level 5 evaluation. The preponderance of the remaining evidence had to also be supportive of this conclusion.

**What is unknown.** Programs not classified in the above three categories were defined as having unknown effects.

### 3.6.2 Blueprints for Violence Prevention

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado has initiated a project that is referred to as Blueprints for Violence Prevention. Blueprints’ mission is to identify outstanding violence and drug prevention programs (Center for Study and Prevention of Violence, n.d.). The project’s staff conduct ongoing reviews of the research pertaining to violence and drug abuse programs in order to determine those that have been found to be exemplary, according to the most rigorous studies. The project has reviewed over 800 programs. Program effectiveness is based upon an initial review by Blueprints staff, followed by a final review and recommendation from a distinguished group of experts in the field of violence prevention.

To be designated as either a Model or Promising program, there must be evidence that the program has deterred violence, delinquency, or drug use using a strong research design. Such a design needs to be experimental with randomization or quasi-experimental with matched control groups. Randomized trials are preferred as random assignment to experimental and control conditions is viewed as offering the most compelling evidence that study results are due to the intervention rather than to preexisting differences between experimental and control groups.
and/or other threats to internal validity. However, Blueprints’ panel of experts do consider studies that use control groups that are matched as closely as possible to experimental groups on relevant variables (e.g., gender, race, age, income) and studies with control groups that use statistical techniques to control for initial differences on key variables. Studies using matching are not considered ideal as it cannot be determined if the groups may vary on some characteristics that have not been matched or controlled for and that are related to program outcome.

Other aspects of research designs are also considered: 1) Sample sizes must be large enough to detect statistically significant differences between groups. (2) A high level of attrition, or loss of study participants, is a concern as it can compromise the integrity of the original randomization or matching process. It reduces confidence that the original sample and final sample are comparable and that the final experimental and control comparisons reflect only treatment effects. (3) Tests used in measuring program outcomes must be administered accurately and consistently in order to maximize the reliability of test scores. Instruments used to measure outcomes should be demonstrated to be reliable and valid.

In addition, to achieve the status of a Model program, the effects of the program on one of the above outcomes must be sustained for at least one year post-treatment and must have been replicated with demonstrated effects at least one additional site. Also considered in the selection of Model programs is whether there is evidence that change in the targeted risk or protective factor(s) mediates the change in violent behavior. Such evidence reinforces the claim that participation in the program is responsible for the change in violent behavior. Finally, for Model program status to be achieved, it must be shown to be cost effective. Therefore, a program’s costs should be less or no greater than its anticipated benefits. Otherwise, it is unsustainable in today’s difficult fiscal environment. Due to the methodological rigor required, the Blueprints program to date has identified just 11 Model programs.

Table 1 summarizes some of the most prominent program rating systems in the criminal justice and human services fields. While the rating systems are varied, the table does show that to qualify as a model, exemplary, effective, or promising program, evaluation studies often must meet the following requirements:
• Research designs must typically be randomized experiments or quasi-experiments with matched intervention and control groups;
• They must demonstrate statistically significant results pointing to program effectiveness;
• Exemplary or model programs should have been successfully replicated;
• Exemplary or model programs must display sustained effects;
• Evaluations must control for threats to internal validity;
• Evaluations must ensure intervention fidelity;
• Evaluations must be appropriate for the target population and setting.
### Table 1 – Approaches to the Rating of Crime Prevention and Other Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENCY/INSTITUTE/RESEARCH GROUP</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PROGRAM CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>RESEARCH DESIGNS/CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy. Washington, DC.</td>
<td>The Coalition promotes programs in areas such as education, crime, substance use, and poverty reduction.</td>
<td>Effective, Ineffective, No Effects/Adverse Effects</td>
<td>Randomized control trials only. Studies must have significant policy implications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. Boulder, Colorado</td>
<td>The Center’s main objective is violence prevention from birth to age 19.</td>
<td>Model and Promising</td>
<td>Experimental and quasi-experimental designs. Model programs must display sustained effects for one year, replication at one site, cost effectiveness, and evidence of impact of risk or protective factor on the outcome (violence).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services &amp; Prevention Research Center for the Promotion of Human Development, Pennsylvania State University</td>
<td>Reviewed programs dealing with the reduction of risks or effects of psychopathology in school aged children.</td>
<td>Effective and Promising</td>
<td>Experimental and quasi-experimental designs with pre-test, post-test, and preferably follow-up data. Programs had to have a written implementation plan and had to produce improvements in psychological symptomatology or factors directly associated with increased risk for child mental disorders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Dept. of Health &amp; Human Services</td>
<td>Created the National Registry of Effective Programs on substance abuse and mental health issues.</td>
<td>A quality of research rating of 0-4 is given for the strength of the evidence supporting each program outcome, rather than a rating for an entire program</td>
<td>Ratings are based on six criteria: reliability, validity, intervention fidelity, missing data and attrition, potential confounding variables, and appropriateness of analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education, Safe Schools</td>
<td>Aim is to make schools safe, disciplined, and drug free by reducing substance abuse, violence, and other conduct changes, through research that identifies risk and protective factors.</td>
<td>Exemplary and Promising</td>
<td>Criteria include evidence of efficacy through adequate controls for threats to internal validity, clear and appropriate program goals for population and setting, program content and processes aligned with goals, engagement of program with targeted population, integration of program into school’s mission, and information is provided for replication in other settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities that Care, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental health Services Administration</td>
<td>Communities That Care focus on preventing adolescent substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropout, and violence as well as promoting the positive development of youth and children.</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Experimental designs or quasi-experimental studies in which the equivalence of intervention and control groups in the pre-intervention period was assessed. Other criteria include: (1) appropriate methods of analysis; (2) statistically significant results; (3) measurement reliability and validity; (4) limited missing data; and (5) adequate controls for threats to internal validity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherman et al., University of Maryland Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Sherman and his colleagues conducted a major review of crime prevention programs in the 1990s.</td>
<td>Effective, Ineffective, Promising, Unknown</td>
<td>Developed a five-point scale to rate the rigor of program evaluations. The most rigorous evaluations were levels 3-5, involving experimental or quasi-experimental designs. Level 5 involves a randomized experiment. Programs coded as working (effective) had at least two level 3 to level 5 evaluations showing statistically significant results pointing to program effectiveness. The preponderance of all available evidence had to indicate program effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention</td>
<td>A review was conducted of programs that focused on family</td>
<td>Exemplary 1, Exemplary 2, Model, and</td>
<td>Programs were rated on theory, fidelity, sampling strategy, implementation, attrition,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention  | therapy, family skills training, in-home family support, and parenting programs.  | Promising  | measures, data collection, missing data, analysis, replications, dissemination capability, cultural and age appropriateness, integrity, and program utility: Exemplary I: Program has randomized experimental design and replication by an independent investigator. Outcome data show clear evidence of program effectiveness. Exemplary II: Program has experimental design with randomized sample. Outcome data show clear evidence of program effectiveness. Model: Program has experimental or quasi-experimental design with few or no replications. Data may not be as strong in demonstrating program effectiveness. Promising: Program has limited research and/or employs non-experimental designs. Promising but scientific confirmation needed.

U.S. Surgeon General  | The primary focus of the report was violence prevention and intervention.  | Model and Promising  | Model programs have experimental or quasi-experimental designs, significant effects on violence or serious delinquency (Level 1) or any risk factor for violence with a large effect size of .30 or greater (Level 2), replication with demonstrated effects, and sustainability of effect. Promising programs meet the first two criteria (although risk factors of .10 or greater are acceptable), but programs may have either replication or sustainability of effects (both not necessary).

4. Methodology

The present literature review identifies evaluations of crime prevention programs that are similar in their objectives, target group, and in scope to programs offered by Palm Beach County. With the exception of seminal works overseas, the search is confined to sources within the United States.

4.1 A focus on rigorous, independent evaluations

Hundreds of crime prevention programs have been implemented in the United States and many have not even been subject to the most basic evaluation. While programs are well-intentioned, very few of them are supported by evidence demonstrating their effectiveness (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, n.d.). Evaluations that are merely anecdotal in nature, lacking any discernible methodology, will be excluded from the review. Similarly, self-evaluations conducted by the agencies responsible for a program are generally excluded due to the vested interest involved and, therefore, potential for bias.

4.2 Assessing the Evidence

This review of evaluations of crime prevention programs follows the approach taken for more systematic reviews in order to minimize bias and error in drawing conclusions from the scholarly literature. The vast majority of evaluations included were either true experiments or quasi-experiments in which a comparison group or zone was compared to the treatment group or zone. Due to the small number of evaluations identified in relation to a few programs/strategies, some descriptive studies were included although this fact was taken into account in drawing conclusions. The programs reviewed were ranked as follows: Exemplary (Model), Promising, Ineffective, or Unknown.
**Exemplary/Model Programs**

- Research designs must typically be randomized experiments or quasi-experiments with matched intervention and control groups;
- They must demonstrate statistically significant results pointing to program effectiveness;
- They must be shown to be cost effective (i.e., anticipated benefits outweigh costs);
- Findings should have been successfully replicated (at least two studies);
- Programs must display sustained effects (over at least one year);
- Evaluations must control for threats to internal validity;
- Evaluations must ensure intervention fidelity;
- Where the units of analysis are individuals, the number of units in both the treatment and control groups must equal 50 or more.

**Promising Programs**

The requirements are the same as for Exemplary programs with the exception that no replication at other sites has been undertaken, there has been no demonstration of sustained effects, and there has been no cost-benefit analysis.

**Ineffective Programs**

Research designs must typically be randomized experiments or quasi-experiments with matched intervention and control groups and at least two of these studies must point to the ineffectiveness of the program. In addition, the preponderance of evidence from evaluation studies as a whole must indicate that the program is not effective.

**Unknown Effectiveness**

Any program not classified into one of the above three categories is deemed to have unknown effects.
4.3 Timelines
The review examined evaluations undertaken from 1995 to the present. Seminal publications prior to 1995 were also included in the analysis.

4.4 Language of Materials
Materials reviewed in the present project were limited to those published in the English language.

4.5 Sources
The literature review relied on a number of databases, scholarly, governmental, and institutional sources. The search for relevant documents included the following sources:

- Scholarly databases that identified materials published in academic journals (e.g., Criminal Justice Abstracts).
- A general search of the Internet with selected keywords.
- Key governmental Web sites as well as those of research institutes engaged in crime prevention research. These included the sites of the National Institute of Justice Publications, National Criminal Justice Reference Service, The Campbell Collaboration (Crime and Justice), Blueprints Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Model Programs Guide, and Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.
5. Outcome Evaluations of Major Crime Prevention Programs

This section reviews the outcomes evaluations relating to ten major types of crime prevention programs of the type offered by Palm Beach County. An overall assessment of the evidence is provided following the description of the evaluations in each program area. Challenges encountered in evaluating programs and in interpreting the results are also discussed.
5.1 Evaluations of Firearm and Gang Violence Prevention Programs
Operation Ceasefire (Boston)

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Youths 24 years of age and under

The Boston Gun Project was a problem-oriented policing initiative that aimed to reduce homicide victimization among youths in Boston. Ceasefire was a multiagency project that applied research techniques to understand the nature and dynamics of youth violence in the city. The two main elements of the project were a law enforcement attack on firearms traffickers supplying youth with illicit guns and the use of a “pulling levers” strategy to generate a strong deterrent to gang violence. The “pulling levers” approach in Boston involved reaching out directly to members of the targeted gangs, delivering an explicit message that violence would not be tolerated, and backing up that message by applying every appropriate sanction legally available when violence occurred.

Ceasefire’s multiagency Working Group included representatives from the Boston Police Department, ATF, prosecutors, social workers, probation and parole officers. The Working Group focused enforcement attention on traffickers of the makes and calibers of guns most used by gang members and on traffickers of guns that had short time-to-crime intervals (i.e., guns that are used in crime shortly after they are acquired). Another focus was on traffickers of guns used by Boston’s most violent gangs. There was also an attempt to restore obliterated serial numbers of confiscated guns and to investigate trafficking based on those restorations. Leads were developed from the systematic debriefing of gang-affiliated arrestees or those involved in violent crime. Concurrently, the Streetworkers (a coalition of Boston social service workers), probation and parole officers, and churches and other community groups offered gang members services and other types of assistance.

Throughout the intervention process the Ceasefire message was delivered repeatedly in formal meetings with gang members, through individual police and probation contacts with gang members, through meetings with inmates in secure juvenile facilities, and through gang outreach workers. The message was a promise to gang members that violent behavior (especially gun violence) would produce an immediate and intense response—the “pulling levers” strategy.
METHOD/APPROACH

Used a one-group interrupted time-series design. No comparison area was possible as the program operated throughout the city. Comparisons were drawn with other cities in the U.S.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

Persons who were 24 years of age and under.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Monthly number of youth homicide victims, shots-fired calls for service, gun assaults, youth gun assaults, street-level drug activity.

FINDINGS

- Operation Ceasefire was associated with a 63-percent decrease in youth homicides per month, a 32-percent decrease in shots-fired calls for service per month, a 25-percent decrease in gun assaults per month, and a 44-percent decrease in the number of youth gun assaults per month in the highest risk district (Roxbury).

- When controlling for changes in the employment rate, in Boston’s youth population, in street-level drug activity, in older victimization, and in violent index crimes across the city, Operation Ceasefire remained associated with significant decreases in the monthly number of youth homicides and measures of nonfatal serious violence.

- Boston’s significant youth homicide reduction associated with Operation Ceasefire was larger and more abrupt when compared with youth homicide trends in most U.S. and New England cities.

COSTS OF THE PROGRAM/EVALUATION

Not provided.

REFERENCE

Operation Ceasefire Update (Boston)

PROGRAM RATING: Remains promising
TARGET POPULATION: Young, violent offenders

This article was an analysis of the situation in Boston following the expiration of funding for Ceasefire in 2000 and the events leading up to experimentation with the Ceasefire approach in 2006. Youth violence again rose dramatically in Boston in the early 2000s. Between 2000 and 2006, the number of youth homicides increased by 160 percent and this situation has been attributed to a resurgence of gang violence. The article assesses whether the resurgence of this violence is a reflection of the failure of the Boston approach to youth violence or whether the collaborative effort displayed in the 1990s has not been sustained.

METHOD/APPROACH
This article provides an analysis of youth homicide trends in Boston in the post-Ceasefire era and the response of the city to the violence.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH
Includes persons age 24 and under.

OUTCOME MEASURE
Youth, gang-related homicides.

FINDINGS
- In the early 2000s, Boston Police failed to disaggregate homicide statistics by age and circumstances and therefore failed to recognize a surge in youth gang-related homicides. By looking at the overall level of homicide, the police missed the steady growth of this problem.

- Ceasefire officially ended in 2000, after which the BPD maintained some of the tactics but focused on an array of crime problems, rather than on gang violence alone.
• Following September 11, 2001, law enforcement resources shifted to anti-terrorism activities.

• Staff changes at senior levels, intensive crackdowns that appeared to damage community relations, and a dysfunctional rivalry among two police Superintendents undermined the ability of the department to deal with gang violence.

• Rivalries and apathy among those Black Ministers who had been so integral to the success of Ceasefire also prevented the mobilization against gang violence.

• Complaints made by minorities against the police increased from the late 1990s and public confidence in the police declined.

• In 2006, the BPD again began to experiment with the Operation Ceasefire approach, blending a law enforcement approach with social services. While no rigorous evaluation has been conducted, there are some indications that this approach is once again producing results. For example, homicides and shooting in the city once again fell (by over 10 percent) from 2006 to 2007.

COSTS OF THE PROGRAM/EVALUATION

Not provided.

REFERENCE

CeaseFire Chicago

PROGRAM RATING:       Model or Promising

TARGET POPULATION:  Individuals at high risk of being the victim or perpetrator of gun violence

CeaseFire Chicago is administered by the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention (CPVP). Formed in 1999, it began to expand in Chicago and elsewhere in Illinois during the 2000s. At its peak, it was active at approximately 25 program sites. All of these sites had above average crime and poverty rates. CeaseFire focused on changing the behavior of a small number of carefully selected persons deemed to be at high risk of either "being shot or being a shooter" in the near future. Violence interrupters (often former gang members) worked on the street, mediating conflicts between gangs and intervening to disrupt the cycle of retaliatory violence that often follows a shooting. Outreach workers counseled young clients and connected them to a range of services. CeaseFire's interventions are based on a theory of behavior that specifies how change agents can alter operative norms regarding violence, provide on-the-spot alternatives to violence when gangs and individuals on the street make decisions, and increase the perceived risks and costs of involvement in violence among high-risk young people. The risk component of the model led to a strategic decision to largely hire staff members who could gain the attention of target audiences and communicate these messages credibly. Some of the program's core concepts and strategies were adapted from the public health field, which has shown considerable success in addressing issues such as smoking, seat belt use, and immunization.

METHOD/APPROACH

The evaluation of CeaseFire had both process and outcome components. The process component examined issues in the selection of target neighborhoods, the choice of local host organizations, and staffing, training, and management practices. The outcome evaluation applied statistical models, crime hot spot maps, and gang network analyses to assess the program's impact on shootings and killings in the program’s sites. In each case, changes in the target areas after the introduction of the program were contrasted with trends in matched comparison areas.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

None provided.
OUTCOME MEASURES
Number of shootings, gun homicides, gang involvement in homicide, retaliatory killings, size and intensity of shooting hot spots.

FINDINGS:
A large survey of clients found that they rated as high risk according to many indicators. Clients tended to see their outreach workers frequently and many were active participants in CeaseFire activities. When interviewed, they reported obtaining considerable assistance with employment, returning to school, and in disengaging from a gang.

An examination of the impact of CeaseFire on shootings and killings found that violence was down by one measure or another in most of the areas that were examined in detail. Some of the key findings were as follows:

- There were significant shifts in gang homicide patterns in most of these areas due to the program, including declines in gang involvement in homicide and retaliatory killings.

- At four sites, the introduction of CeaseFire appeared to be associated with statistically significant declines in shootings overall—declines that ranged from 17 to 24 percent.

- In four partially overlapping sites, there were noticeable declines (16 to 34 percent) in the number of persons actually shot.

- The program helped reduced gun homicides at one site only.

- The analysis of crime hot spots found that the program areas grew noticeably safer at six of the seven sites and there was evidence that decreases in the size and intensity of shooting hot spots were linked to the introduction of CeaseFire in four of these areas. In two other areas, shooting hot spots declined, but this decline could not be conclusively linked to CeaseFire.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION
The budget per site for one year was $240,000.

REFERENCE:
This project applied the Boston model used in Operation Ceasefire to 10 sites across the U.S. through the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI). Boston’s approach had involved multiagency collaboration, integration of research into program planning and implementation, and strategic problem solving. Research and analysis were an integral part of this intervention, as they helped identify problems and provided ongoing feedback as to elements of the program that required improvement. Enforcement activities included targeting hotspots and repeat offenders, crackdowns, sweeps, saturation patrols, serving warrants, and making unannounced visits to probationers. Offender notification or “lever-pulling” meetings were held in which the prosecutor’s team met with high-risk individuals and informed them that any violence linked to them would be sanctioned. At the same time, the team offered job-related, educational, and other assistance. Two of the sites developed emergency room-based programs to collect information for research and prosecution purposes.

METHOD/APPROACH

At each site, rates of the targeted crimes were compared before and after the intervention. Comparisons were also made with each city as a whole.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

Definitions varied by site. For example, in Portland, it was 15-24 year-olds who were targeted, while in Winston-Salem it was youth under 18 who were the focus of the program.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Nine of the 10 sites targeted homicide, youth violence, or firearms violence. The one exception was Memphis, where the emphasis was on rape and sexual assault.
FINDINGS:

- The evaluation found that the SACSI approach, when properly implemented, was associated with reductions in targeted violent crimes of up to 50 percent. As the program did not involve random assignment to targeted and control areas, the reductions could not be conclusively attributed to the program.

- The impact of the “lever-pulling” approach was mixed. While offenders tended to indicate that they heard the message, this usually did not translate to lower recidivism rates.

- Researchers in New Haven found that residents had a decreased fear of crime, increased satisfaction with the quality of life, and a heightened awareness that illegal gun carriers would be targeted.

- Homicide rates declined at program sites more sharply than in U.S. cities overall.

- Keys to success included the leadership provided by the U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, the multiagency partnership, the integration of research into problem selection, analysis, strategic planning, and assessment, and the combination of crime suppression and prevention initiatives.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

Cost-related information was not provided.

REFERENCE:

Manchester (England) Project

PROGRAM RATING: Not applicable
TARGET POPULATION: Individuals engaged in gang and gun violence

This was a multiagency project designed to reduce gang-related violence in Manchester. It was originally designed to replicate the Boston Gun Project, which had shown that gang-related shootings can be tackled through addressing its situational determinants rather than its root causes. The Manchester Project began to drift toward preventing individuals from joining gangs or diverting them once they did join.

METHOD/APPROACH

This was primarily a process rather than outcome assessment. It was a case study of Manchester’s program, without any comparison zone.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

Not provided.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Level of shootings.

FINDINGS:

This article dealt primarily with the challenges of implementing a violence prevention project modeled on the Boston Project. Due to the difficulty of defining gangs, it was found that it is preferable to focus on harmful individual and group behavior. Aside from definitional problems, there were issues of labeling individuals and those thought to be gang members. The buy-in of families was more difficult to obtain when the term “gang” was used.
COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

Cost-related information was not provided.

REFERENCE:

Indianapolis Lever-Pulling Experiment

PROGRAM RATING: Not effective in this project.

TARGET POPULATION: Felony probationers

This evaluation related to a lever-pulling strategy implemented in Indianapolis, Indiana. The lever-pulling model was first developed as part of a broad-based, problem-solving effort implemented in Boston in the mid-1990s. One distinctive feature of this effort was the attempt to deter the future violent conduct of chronic offenders by informing them about the impact their violence had on the community and by using all available legal sanctions (i.e., levers) against these offenders when violence occurred. The strategy uses a problem-solving approach, whereby a specific problem is selected and data (including front-line intelligence) are collected to achieve a thorough understanding of the problem. The program was coordinated by an interagency working group involving federal and local police, probation, prosecutors, and community resource personnel. The program involves direct communication to the offending population that there is an intensive effort to disrupt specific criminal activities. Typically, this communication occurs at a “call-in” meeting between probationers and members of the working group. The message includes a summary of the changing nature of the criminal justice response (sticks) and available opportunities for program participation (carrots). Finally, follow-up includes applying “levers” where appropriate. The Indianapolis study compared the efficacy of a more deterrence-oriented message (lever-pulling) with one that was focused more on programs available to offenders.

METHOD/APPROACH

Probationers were randomly assigned to a law enforcement lever-pulling group (meeting occurred at a courthouse), a community leader lever-pulling group (meeting occurred in a community center), and a regular probation control group. Those eligible for the study were felony probationers, who committed violent, gun, drug, or property crimes.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

None provided.
OUTCOME MEASURES

Interview data indicating the reactions of probationers to lever-pulling, technical violations of probation, and recidivism (re-arrest).

FINDINGS

- Probationers in both treatment groups felt they made better choices because they attended the meetings, felt that police would follow through and crack down on violent crime, participating in the meetings discourage people from crime, probationers are being watched more closely, and community leaders help with opportunities to succeed.

- The law enforcement group probationers were significantly more likely to remember that law enforcement is cracking down on violent and gun crime, that they will go to federal prison if caught carrying a gun, that probation is watching their behavior closely, and that the police want them to make good choices.

- The treatment and control groups did not differ on recidivism.

- The treatment and control groups committed similar offenses upon relapse, but the law enforcement group was more likely to recidivate to a less serious offense.

- Treatment and control groups did not differ with regard to technical violations.

- The treatment probationers were not more likely to take advantage of community programming but were less likely to miss meetings with probation officers.

- Lever pulling through “call-in” meetings was not sustained after the initial meeting.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

Information not provided.

REFERENCE:

Judge Willie Lipscomb, Jr. of Detroit launched a program that was designed to change attitudes and behaviors that were viewed as contributing to gun violence. In the Handgun Intervention Program (HIP), offenders who had been arrested for carrying concealed weapons were required, as a condition of pretrial release, to attend a class in which they were taught the negative consequences of gun use and in which they were challenged to take personal responsibility for reducing those consequences. From its inception in 1993, HIP has had upwards of 6,000 participants, more than 90 percent of whom were African Americans.

METHOD/APPROACH

There was a treatment group and a control group. Both groups were tested twice: before arraignment and before the second court appearance. The treatment group received the class in between those two events.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

No definition offered but the mean age of the test and control groups was 26.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Attitudes toward gun use and views by participants as to whether they anticipated they would make changes with regard to gun carrying.

FINDINGS:

• Attitudes toward gun use improved significantly in the short run.

• A follow-up interview six months later was considered invalid due to attrition.
• However, many participants questioned whether their behavior would change because they felt the dangers of the street made it necessary for them to carry a gun.

• In the future, the project will examine the impact of the program on recidivism in relation to gun crimes.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

Operation Ceasefire (Los Angeles)

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Gang members

This project was an adaptation of the Boston model. It was a multiagency effort focused on the specific problem of gun violence. Most homicide was committed by gangs in the selected area (Hollenbeck) and interventions were triggered by a gang-related gun crime. Researchers were an integral part of the initiative, conducting an analysis of the problem to fully understand the issue. From Boston, Los Angeles also adopted a menu of “sticks” and “carrots.” Sticks were a range of sanctions or “levers” used to make gang members desist from violence by holding all of them accountable for violence committed by any one of them. Saturation patrol by the police is an example of a lever. The levers would be pulled in response to a triggering event (i.e., serious crime). In advance of lever-pulling, the message would be retailed; that is, gang members would be told not only of the consequences that would result from gun violence but also of social services and alternatives to violence available to them.

METHOD/APPROACH

Comparisons were made between Boyle Heights, a neighborhood within Hollenbeck in which many of the interventions occurred, and the remainder of Hollenbeck. In addition, rates of violence were compared before and after the intervention. Separate measures of impact were undertaken during the four months in which most of the interventions were applied (the suppression phase) and the two-month period following that phase (the deterrence phase).

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

Not provided.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Levels of violent crime, gang crime, and gun crime.
FINDINGS:

- In Boyle Heights, where retailing was done and social services were offered, violent, gang, and gun crime all declined; however, the differences in the declines with the rest of Hollenbeck, where no interventions took place, were not statistically significant.

- Intensive law enforcement took place in the five police reporting districts of Boyle Heights where the gangs Cuatro Flats and TMC were most active. In these districts, violent crime fell during the suppression phase, and the decline was even stronger in the deterrence phase (37 percent overall, compared with 24 percent in the rest of Boyle Heights).

- Gang crime also fell during the suppression phase, although it began to rise during the deterrence phase.

- Gun crime did not decline more steeply in the five districts with the intervention than in the rest of Boyle Heights.

- The intervention seemed to be most effective during the suppression phase, with the effect declining slightly in the deterrence phase. However, because the decline continued into the deterrence phase, the possibility of a longer term effect cannot be ruled out.

- The law enforcement (i.e., lever pulling) components of the intervention showed more promising effects than the retailing components, most notably in the measurable reductions in crime.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

Reducing Gun Violence in Atlanta

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown

TARGET POPULATION: Juveniles who carry guns and commit gun crimes; adults who supply guns to juveniles.

This multiagency effort builds on the Boston model. Researchers collaborated with practitioners, employing a data-driven approach to reduce gun violence and carrying in Atlanta. The aims of the project also included the reduction of a demand for and supply of firearms, as well as the rehabilitation of young offenders. Focus groups with youth were conducted to understand their gun carrying and uses of firearms. Project aims were addressed through a combination of youth outreach, law enforcement measures, and rehabilitation through diversion programs. The program focused on one crime hot spot, Zone 1 of Atlanta Police Department’s six patrol zones.

METHOD/APPROACH

Baseline data were collected on the fear of crime and juvenile weapons offenses in Metro Atlanta. Comparisons were made before and after the intervention, as well as with comparison zones and the state as a whole.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

Incarcerated youth interviewed were 13-18 years of age. The ages of other youth participating in the study were not indicated.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Gun-related crime and illegal gun carrying, especially by juveniles; homicide levels; fear of crime among juveniles and adults.

FINDINGS:

- The number of homicides fell 27 percent in the 6 years following the intervention. However, the homicide rate had begun to fall prior to the program, there was also a statewide decline in
homicide, and elements of the program were not implemented in accordance with their design.

- Fewer adults saw juvenile violence as a serious problem; however, the perceptions of juveniles did not change appreciably.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**

Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Hardcore gang youth

This project represents an inter-organizational and community approach to the most serious forms of gang violence. The targeted youth carry guns, are repeat offenders, and are influential participants in a gang. The approach involved a team of youth workers, probation officers, tactical police officers, and a community organization carrying out social intervention, social opportunities provision, gang suppression, and social control.

METHOD/APPROACH

Targeted youth were compared with those in the area not exposed to the interventions.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

Targeted youth in their mid-teens to early 20s.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Serious violence among gang youth, educational and job attainment, residents’ perceptions of gang violence.

FINDINGS:

- The project reduced the problem of gang violence relative to control areas over a four-year period.
- Targeted youth showed major improvements in school and job attainment.
- Project youth achieved a reduction in gang violence that exceeded that of two control groups.
- Little Village had the smallest increase in gang violence from a four-year pre-program period relative to six similar neighborhoods.
- Residents showed a greater reduction in the perceived level of gang violence than did residents in a neighboring community.
COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

Pulling Levers Strategy (Lowell, MA)

PROGRAM RATING: Model or Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Hardcore gangs and gang members

The City of Lowell adopted a problem-oriented approach involving a thorough analysis of the homicide problem and offenses committed with guns in the city of Lowell. Gang-related motives were involved in a high proportion of homicides and gun-related assaults and most of these incidents were part of a cycle of retaliation. Lowell’s gang violence reduction strategy borrowed heavily from Boston’s Operation Ceasefire intervention. The pulling levers strategy seemed to be an appropriate approach to dealing with a serious gun violence problem that was highly concentrated among a small number of gang-involved chronic offenders engaged in continuing disputes. A multiagency partnership, involving criminal justice organizations, social service agencies, and community-based groups, focused prevention, intervention, and enforcement activities on gang members involved in ongoing violent conflicts. When gang violence occurred, gang members were informed that they were under close scrutiny. At the same time, street workers offered various social services to these individuals. Those highly influential and dangerous gang members not responding to these efforts were subject to strategies that would remove them from the community.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

Defined as persons between the ages of 15 and 24.

METHOD/APPROACH

As the intervention was available to all areas within Lowell with a gun violence problem, there were no control zones or gangs. A one-group interrupted time-series analysis was conducted and comparisons were made between gun violence trends in Lowell and those found in other Massachusetts cities.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Gun homicide and gun aggravated assaults.
**FINDINGS:**

- The monthly count of gun homicides and gun assaults in Lowell declined by 27.8 percent from the pre- to the post-intervention period.
- Homicides decreased by 40 percent in the post-intervention period.
- Gang-related homicides fell by 67 percent following the inception of the program.
- While Lowell experienced a major decline in gun homicides and assaults during the program period, seven comparable cities in the state, as well as Massachusetts as a whole, experienced increases in these events.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**

Evaluations of the Spergel Model

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown (when Little Village study not considered) and Promising when it is

TARGET POPULATION: Gang-involved youth

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) implemented some variation of the Comprehensive Gang Model (Spergel model) at five sites in order to assess its efficacy in reducing youth crime, especially violence, and to improve the capacity of these communities to address the youth gang problem. The strategies subsumed within the Spergel model included community mobilization, social intervention, provision of opportunities, organizational change and development, and suppression. In some cases, critical elements of the Comprehensive Model were missing (see below).

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

Mesa—from age 12 to young adults; Riverside—gang-involved youth from 12-22.

METHOD/APPROACH

Varied across sites, but generally involved the use of quasi-experimental designs that compared program youth with comparison groups.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Total arrests (Mesa); youth gang violence (Riverside); number of arrests (Bloomington-Normal); number of arrests (San Antonio); total arrests and arrests for serious violent crime (Tucson).

FINDINGS:

- **Mesa, AZ** – Program youth had an 18 percent greater reduction in total arrests than did comparison youth, the reduction was greatest for the oldest youth (over the age of 18), and females in the program showed a greater reduction in arrests than did males. The total incidents of crime that youth typically commit declined 10 percent more in the program area than in the average of three comparison areas. The program did not incorporate all the
elements of the Comprehensive Gang Model, especially the use of outreach workers and collaboration with grassroots organizations.

- **Riverside, CA** - The project effectively reduced arrests for both serious and less serious violent crimes after program participation and in comparison with a control group. Program youth also had fewer repeat drug arrests. The combination of individual counseling, job services, school-related services, suppression activities, family counseling, group services, and material services accounted for much of the reduction in arrests. Youth who received services for two years or more showed the greatest reductions in arrests. However, there was no evidence that the project reduced program youths’ involvement in gangs or the size of gang membership in the project area.

- **Bloomington-Normal, IL** – Evaluators found that this program did not follow the Comprehensive Gang Model and focused almost exclusively on suppression at the expense of other critical program elements. The program had no effect keeping youth away from gangs and delinquency, as compared with similar youth in the comparison site. Instead, the program was associated with an increase in arrests for program youth, particularly those without prior arrest records.

- **San Antonio, TX** – This site lacked many critical elements of the Comprehensive Gang Model. Although arrest levels for program youth were generally lower than for comparison youth, these differences did not achieve statistical significance.

- **Tucson, AZ** – According to the evaluators, this site also did not adopt the Comprehensive Gang Model. Although program youth showed a decrease in yearly total arrests versus non-program youth, the difference was not statistically significant. There was less of an increase in arrests for serious violent crime for program youth than for comparison youth, but the difference was not statistically significant. Behavioral improvements among females involved in the program were marginally better than among program males.

- The evaluators noted that, when properly implemented, the combination of prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies was successful in reducing the gang problem.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**

The Kansas City Gun Experiment

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Individuals carrying concealed guns in a high-risk area

This experiment was implemented in a beat where the homicide rate was 20 times higher than the national average. The experiment tried to answer the question: “If police could get more guns off the street, would there be fewer gun crimes?” Some argue that it is not the total volume of guns that is associated with violence but the carrying of guns in high-risk areas at high-risk times. The program involved additional patrols and gun seizures in an area known for numerous driveby shootings (i.e., it was a gun crime “hot spot”). The additional patrols focused exclusively on gun detection through proactive patrol and did not respond to calls for service.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

None provided.

METHOD/APPRAOCH

A before-after design with a comparison area.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Gun crimes and guns seized; citizens’ perceptions of the program.

FINDINGS:

- Gun seizures by police in the target area increased by more than 65 percent and gun crimes declined in that area by 49 percent.

- Neither gun crimes nor gun seizures changed significantly in the comparison beat several miles away, where the directed patrol was not present.
• There was no measurable displacement of gun crimes to patrol zones surrounding the target area.

• Driveby shootings dropped from 7 to 1 in the target area, while they doubled in the comparison area, and showed no displacement to adjoining beats.

• Homicides showed a statistically significant reduction in the target area but not in the comparison area.

• When the experimental period was over, crimes involving firearms gradually increased again until a second phase of the program began. Gun crimes fell again in the second phase but not as consistently as in the first phase.

• Surveys of citizens showed that respondents in the target area became less fearful of crime and more positive about their neighborhood than respondents in the comparison area.

• Traffic stops were the most productive method of finding guns.

• Two-thirds of the persons arrested for gun carrying in the target area lived outside the area.

• Only gun crimes were affected by the directed patrols, with no reduction in the number of calls for service or in the total number of violent or nonviolent crimes reported.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

The authors mentioned that the program’s cost was modest but did not provide specific dollar figures. They did observe that an investment of 4,512 police officer-hours was associated with 29 more guns seized and 83 fewer gun crimes, or 54 patrol hours per gun crime and more than 2 gun crimes prevented per gun seized.

**REFERENCE:**

Project Safe Neighborhoods (94 Sites)

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Actual and potential gun offenders

In 2001, the U.S. Department of Justice developed Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), an initiative designed to reduce gun violence at the local level. It was implemented in all 94 U.S. Attorney districts. PSN built on successful approaches adopted in the Boston Ceasefire project, the ten-city Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI), and Richmond’s Project Exile. It was designed as a collaborative, problem solving initiative utilizing a research-based model to reduce gun violence through enforcement, deterrence, and prevention. A core element was the increased federal prosecution of illegal gun use and possession on the part of prohibited persons. Increased federal prosecution was intended to incapacitate chronic violent offenders as well as to communicate a credible deterrent threat to potential gun offenders. In addition to prosecution, PSN comprised five key components: 1) partnerships; 2) strategic planning and research integration; 3) training; 4) outreach; and 5) accountability. The intent was to focus on the contexts driving gun crime in each locality.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

None provided.

METHOD/APPROACH

Evaluations often adopted before-after designs with a comparison area.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Gun crime, violent crime.
**FINDINGS:**

- Interviews continually reinforced the power of the U.S. Attorney and the U.S. Attorney’s Office to exert a leadership role in local crime prevention programs.

- Two of the cities (Montgomery and Mobile, Alabama) followed a Project Exile approach that combined a significant increase in federal prosecution with an intensive media campaign communicating a deterrence theme. Both experienced significant declines in gun crime compared to the trend in property crime. Mobile also experienced a decline in gunshot wound admissions to the trauma center.

- Five cities followed what was described as a strategic problem solving, multiple intervention strategy that roughly followed the model developed in Boston’s Ceasefire and the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (Durham, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Lowell, Massachusetts and St. Louis, Missouri). All of these cities experienced a decline in gun crime following the implementation of PSN, although one was not statistically significant and another was ambiguous given declines in the control areas.

- PSN target cities experienced a 4.1 percent decline in violent crime compared to a 0.9 percent decline in non-target cities. Further, when the level of dosage was included in the multivariate models, it indicated that PSN target cities experienced a greater decline in violent crime as the level of PSN dosage increased, controlling for a number of other factors.

- PSN target cities in high federal prosecution districts experienced a 13.1 percent decline in violent crime. By contrast, non-target cities in low federal prosecution districts experienced an increase of 7.8 percent in violent crime.

- A rebound in violent crime was observed in all cities in the 2004-2006 period. The increase was most evident in non-target, low dosage cities. PSN target cities in high prosecution districts were able to resist the rebound in 2005 and witnessed a much smaller increase in 2006 than other cities.

- The rebound also raised issues of the sustainability of multiple agency collaborative interventions such as PSN. Two of the cities that served as models for this type of strategic problem solving initiative, and the concept of “pulling levers” in particular, Boston and Indianapolis, experienced increases in homicide during the first decade of the 2000 period. Several of the cities that experienced declines in homicide following the implementation of PSN later experienced increases in homicide.
• The observation that PSN target cities in high prosecution districts resisted the rebound and had the smallest increase, indicated that those jurisdictions that were able to continually maintain dosage and intensity could have long-term impact on violent crime.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No figures were provided.

REFERENCE:

Youth Firearms Violence Initiative

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown Effectiveness

TARGET POPULATION: Persons aged 24 and under.

The Youth Firearms Violence Initiative (YFVI) was launched in 1995 by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). The program funded interventions in 10 cities directed at the increase in youth firearms violence. Jurisdictions were encouraged to employ community policing approaches to develop youth focused programs in order to reduce the number of violent firearms crimes, firearm-related gang offenses, and firearm-related drug offenses. The cities proposed a mix of enforcement programs, prevention programs, and information systems enhancements. Some sites implemented primarily police-based enforcement strategies, while other sites emphasized prevention, community policing, and related approaches.

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

Persons who were 24 years of age and under.

METHOD/APPROACH

Evaluations usually adopted before-after designs and comparisons with the city as a whole when the entire city was not targeted by the program.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Violent youth crime, including gang and drug-related offenses; arrests made; guns seized.

FINDINGS:

- A dedicated unit may exert a greater effect on gun-related crime than a unit that applies traditional tactics. Traditional enforcement tactics did not produce significant changes in the levels of gun violence.
• Cooperation with other police agencies and community organizations and representatives was a key factor in the successful implementation of firearms violence control and prevention strategies.

• Proactive arrest policies that were focused on gun-related offenses were shown to have a measurable association with firearm-related crime.

• Most of the participating departments returned to traditional policing when Federal funding ended. In this sense, the Initiative did not change the way departments conducted their business.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

It cost up to one million in each city to implement the program.

**REFERENCE:**

Assessment

A number of observations emerge from this preliminary review of evaluations of crime prevention programs targeting gun and gang violence. Table 2 summarizes the programs reviewed and their outcomes.

There have been a wide variety of strategies implemented to deal with gun and gang violence. Some strategies rely heavily on a law enforcement approach that aims to suppress and deter such violence. Other programs are more holistic, offering a combination of law enforcement and social services to deal with these issues. Even within one federal initiative, communities tend to modify a strategy, like the Comprehensive Gang Model, such that each community has a somewhat different combination of the elements of that program.

In general, holistic programs have shown promise (e.g., the Little Village), when the model has been followed. Program fidelity has been an issue in relation to this and other models. However, also successful have been some law enforcement efforts in which aggressive law enforcement tactics have been adopted or dedicated units have been formed (Kansas City, Boston). In Kansas City, a unit dedicated to gun seizures was highly successful, as it was not saddled with the responsibility for traditional tasks such as the need to respond to calls for service. Additional resources were required to form this unit.

A number of cities implemented a “pulling levers” approach, whereby gang members are sent a clear message by authorities (often at a meeting organized by the police) to the effect that there will be a new response to criminal activities by the gang. In Boston, the message was more deterrence-based. Gang members were told that a certain and severe response would occur in relation to continuing criminality and law enforcement follows through on this threat where such behavior is repeated. In Indianapolis, the pulling levers strategy included both a deterrence-based message and one in which offenders were informed of social services available to them. Overall, this strategy yielded mixed results. In Boston and Lowell, there were some dramatic effects, whereas in Los Angeles and Indianapolis, the results were less clear or effective. There appeared to be no clearly superior approach when the deterrence-based and treatment-oriented versions were compared. There were also indications that the notification meetings and, hence, lever-pulling were not sustained over time. Thus, in Indianapolis, gang members were called in once by the police and that was the extent of the communication.

Writing about the Lowell initiative, Braga and his colleagues (2008) asserted that:

In contrast to broad-based “zero tolerance” policing initiatives that attempt to prevent serious offending by indiscriminately cracking down on minor crimes committed by all offenders, the pulling levers deterrence strategy seeks to control violence by focusing on particular groups that were behaving violently, subjecting them to a range of discretionary criminal justice system action, and directly
communicating this message to a very narrow and specific audience. In addition to any increases in certainty, severity, and swiftness of sanctions associated with gun violence, the Lowell strategy sought to gain deterrence through the advertising of the law-enforcement strategy, and the personalized nature of its application. It was crucial that gang youth understood the new regime that the city was imposing.

The Chicago CeaseFire project focused on various crime hot spots in which many homicides are committed. The cycle of retaliation among gangs has been responsible for a significant proportion of all homicides. Following a homicide, “violence interrupters” would intervene and work with gangs in order to mediate conflicts and avoid the retaliation. Outreach workers tried to connect gang members with social services. The Chicago CeaseFire program appeared to make some inroads into both gang and retaliatory homicide. The program illustrates that intervention at the right time and place, and in relation to those at highest risk, can make a significant dent into violence, as opposed to less targeted forms of prevention and patrol.

The Detroit Handgun Intervention Program, on the other hand, has been disappointing in its results. The program sought to change the attitudes of individuals who had been arrested for illegally carrying concealed firearms. As a condition of pretrial release, they were given the opportunity to attend a course on the negative consequences of gun use and were challenged to take personal responsibility for tackling those consequences. Attitudes toward gun use did improve, at least in the short term. However, many participants in the program indicated that they would persist in carrying guns due to the dangers of the street.

A federal prosecution initiative (Project Safe Neighborhoods), implemented in all the 94 U.S. Attorney districts, has also been found to be effective. The initiative involved a combination of enforcement, deterrence, and prevention activities. The core of this initiative was enhanced federal prosecution for illegal gun use and possession on the part of those prohibited from engaging in these activities. The decline in violent crime in target cities exceeded, by a considerable margin, the decline in non-target cities—an impressive result given the number of cities adopting the initiative. There was a rebound in violent crime in all cities between 2004 and 2006, raising the question of the sustainability of multiagency collaborative interventions. The question of sustainability has also arisen in the case of Boston’s Ceasefire and in relation to the Youth Firearms Violence Initiative.

A number of the programs (Boston model, Project Safe Neighborhoods, Indianapolis and Lowell Lever Pulling projects), including the more successful ones, have adopted a data-driven, problem-solving approach, whereby the intervention is guided by an initial thorough analysis of the nature, extent, and location of the problem to be tackled. This type of approach removes
some of the subjectivity involved in the development of programs and ensures that political and ideological considerations do not take precedence over public safety considerations.

A number of programs yielded fear reduction and left residents feeling better about their neighborhoods, in addition to crime reduction (Little Village Project, the Kansas City Gun Experiment). Ultimately, these results produce personal empowerment and lead to an increased use of public spaces both by residents and outsiders. This, in turn, can be effective in crime prevention and boosting the local economy. Economic development is often critical in areas that tend to be most conducive to the emergence of gang and drug problems.
Table 2 – Summary of the Programs Reviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGIES</th>
<th>KEY OUTCOMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operation Ceasefire (Boston)</td>
<td>Main elements were a law enforcement attack on firearms traffickers supplying youth with illicit guns and generating a strong deterrent to gang violence through a “pulling levers” strategy.</td>
<td>A 63-percent decrease in youth homicides per month, a 32-percent decrease in shots-fired calls for service per month, a 25-percent decrease in gun assaults per month, and a 44-percent decrease in the number of youth gun assaults per month in the highest risk district.</td>
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<td>Operation Ceasefire Update (Boston)</td>
<td>Follow up analysis in Boston assessed whether the resurgence of violence reflected the failure of the Boston approach to youth violence or whether the collaborative effort displayed in the 1990s was not sustained.</td>
<td>Ceasefire ended in 2000 and efforts focusing on youth violence were not sustained due to internal strife within the Boston Police Department and external factors (e.g., a mobilization against terrorism). However, in 2006, the Ceasefire approach was resurrected and there were indications, once again, of declines in homicide and other violence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ceasefire Chicago</td>
<td>Focused on changing the behavior of a small number of carefully selected persons deemed to be at high risk of either &quot;being shot or being a shooter&quot; in the near future. Violence interrupters (often former gang members) worked on the street, mediating conflicts between gangs and intervening to disrupt the cycle of retaliatory violence that often follows a shooting. Outreach workers counseled young clients and connected them to range of services.</td>
<td>There were significant shifts in gang homicide patterns in most of these areas due to the program, including declines in gang involvement in homicide and retaliatory killings. Program areas grew safer at six of the seven sites and decreases in the size and intensity of shooting hot spots were linked to CeaseFire in four of these areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operation Ceasefire (Los Angeles)</td>
<td>From the Boston model, Los Angeles adopted a menu of “sticks” and “carrots.” Sticks were a range of sanctions or “levers” used to make gang members desist from violence by holding all of them accountable for violence committed by any one of them. Saturation patrol by the police is an example of a lever. The levers would be pulled in response to a triggering event (i.e., serious crime). In advance of lever-pulling, gang members were told not only of the consequences of gun violence but also of social services and alternatives to violence available to them (retailing).</td>
<td>In Boyle Heights, where retailing was done and social services were offered, violent, gang, and gun crime all declined; however, the differences in the declines with the rest of Hollenbeck, were not statistically significant. Intensive law enforcement took place in the five police reporting districts of Boyle Heights and, in these districts, violent crime fell during the suppression phase, and the decline was even stronger in the deterrence phase. Gang crime also fell during the suppression phase, although it began to rise during the deterrence phase. Gun crime did not decline more steeply in the five districts with the intervention than in the rest of Boyle Heights. The intervention seemed to be most effective during the suppression phase, with the effect declining slightly in the deterrence phase. However, because the decline continued into the deterrence phase, the possibility of a longer term effect cannot be ruled out. The law enforcement component showed more promising effects than the retailing components, most notably in crime reduction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Safe Neighborhoods (10 sites)</td>
<td>This initiative was implemented in all the U.S. attorney districts and built upon Operation Ceasefire and the 10-site evaluation. It was designed as a collaborative problem solving initiative utilizing a research-based model to reduce gun violence through enforcement, deterrence, and prevention. A core element was the increased federal prosecution of illegal gun use and possession by prohibited persons. Increased federal prosecution was intended to incapacitate chronic violent offenders as well as to communicate a credible deterrent threat to potential gun offenders. In addition to prosecution, PSN had five key components: 1) partnerships; 2) strategic planning and research integration; 3) training; 4) outreach; and 5) accountability. The aim was to focus on the contexts driving gun crime in each locality.</td>
<td>The number of homicides fell 27 percent in the 6 years following the intervention. However, the homicide rate had begun to fall prior to the program, there was also a statewide decline in homicide, and elements of the program were not implemented in accordance with their design. Fewer adults saw juvenile violence as a serious problem; however, the perceptions of juveniles did not change appreciably.</td>
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<td>Project Safe Neighborhoods (94 Sites)</td>
<td>This initiative was implemented in all the U.S. attorney districts and built upon Operation Ceasefire and the 10-site evaluation. It was designed as a collaborative problem solving initiative utilizing a research-based model to reduce gun violence through enforcement, deterrence, and prevention. A core element was the increased federal prosecution of illegal gun use and possession by prohibited persons. Increased federal prosecution was intended to incapacitate chronic violent offenders as well as to communicate a credible deterrent threat to potential gun offenders. In addition to prosecution, PSN had five key components: 1) partnerships; 2) strategic planning and research integration; 3) training; 4) outreach; and 5) accountability. The aim was to focus on the contexts driving gun crime in each locality.</td>
<td>Target cities experienced a 4.1 percent decline in violent crime compared to a 0.9 percent decline in non-target cities. Target cities in high federal prosecution districts experienced a 13.1 percent decline in violent crime compared to a 7.8 percent in violent crime in low prosecution non-target cities. A rebound in violent crime was observed in all cities in the 2004-2006 period. The increase was most evident in non-target, low dosage cities. Target cities in high prosecution districts were able to resist the rebound in 2005 and witnessed a much smaller increase in 2006 than other cities. The rebound raised issues of the sustainability of multiple agency collaborative interventions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indianapolis Lever Pulling Experiment</td>
<td>The strategy used a problem-solving data driven approach to achieve a full understanding of the problem. The program was a multiagency effort and involved direct communication to the offending population that there is an intensive effort to disrupt specific criminal area activities. This communication occurs at a “call-in” meeting between probationers and members of the working group. The message includes a summary of the changing criminal justice response (sticks) and available opportunities for program participation (carrots).</td>
<td>The treatment and control groups did not differ on technical violations, recidivism and committed similar offenses upon relapse, but the law enforcement group was more likely to commit a less serious offense than before. The treatment group was not more likely to take advantage of community programming. The pulling of levers through “call-in” meetings was not sustained after the initial meeting.</td>
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<td>Pulling Levers Strategy (Lowell, MA)</td>
<td>Lowell adopted a problem-oriented approach involving a thorough analysis of its homicide and firearms problem. Gang-related motives and the cycle of retaliation were involved in a high proportion of homicides and gun-related assaults. Lowell’s gang violence reduction strategy borrowed heavily from the</td>
<td>The monthly count of gun homicides and gun assaults in Lowell declined by 27.8 percent from the pre- to the post-intervention period. Homicides decreased by 40 percent in the post-intervention period. Gang-related</td>
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Boston model, including the pulling levers strategy to deal with ongoing disputes among gang members. A multiagency partnership, involving criminal justice organizations, social service agencies, and community-based groups, focused prevention, intervention, and enforcement activities on these gang members. When gang violence occurred, gang members were informed that they were under close scrutiny. At the same time, streetworkers offered various social services to these individuals. Those not responding to these efforts were subject to strategies that would remove them. Homicides fell by 67 percent following the inception of the program. While Lowell experienced a major decline in gun homicides and assaults during the program period, seven comparable cities in the state, as well as Massachusetts as a whole, experienced increases in these events.

<p>| Detroit Handgun Intervention Program | Judge Lipscomb, Jr., launched a program to change attitudes and behaviors that were viewed as contributing to gun violence. Offenders who had been arrested for carrying concealed weapons were required, as a condition of pretrial release, to attend a class in which they were taught the negative consequences of gun use and in which they were challenged to take personal responsibility for reducing those consequences. | Attitudes toward gun use improved significantly in the short run. A follow-up interview six months later was considered invalid due to attrition. Many participants questioned whether their behavior would change because they felt the dangers of the street made it necessary for them to carry a gun. |
| Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project | This project represents an inter-organizational and community approach to the most serious forms of gang violence. The targeted youth carry guns, are repeat offenders, and are influential participants in a gang. The approach involved a team of youth workers, probation officers, tactical police officers, and a community organization carrying out social intervention, social opportunities provision, gang suppression, and social control. | The project has reduced the problem of gang violence relative to control areas over a four-year period. Targeted youth showed major improvements in school and job attainment. Project youth achieved a reduction in gang violence that exceeded that of two control groups. Residents showed a greater reduction in the perceived level of gang violence than did residents in a neighboring community. |
| Evaluations of the Spergel Model (5 sites) | The Spergel model adopted in the Little Village was tested at five sites. The Comprehensive Gang Model was not implemented with fidelity at all sites. | Mesa, AZ – Program youth had an 18 percent greater reduction in total arrests than did comparison youth, the reduction was greatest for the oldest youth (over the age of 18), and females in the program showed a greater reduction in arrests than did males. Riverside, CA - The project effectively reduced arrests for both serious and less serious violent crimes after program participation and in comparison with a control group. Program youth also had fewer repeat drug arrests. Youth who received services for two years or more showed the greatest reductions in arrests. However, there was no evidence that the project reduced program youths’ involvement in gang. Bloomington-Normal, IL – Evaluators found that this program did not follow the Comprehensive Gang Model and focused almost exclusively on suppression at the expense of other critical program elements. The program had no effect keeping youth away from gangs and delinquency, as compared with similar youth in the comparison site. San Antonio, TX – This site lacked... |</p>
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<td><strong>The Kansas City Gun Experiment</strong></td>
<td>The experiment involved additional patrols and gun seizures in an area known for numerous driveby shootings (i.e., it was a gun crime “hot spot”). The additional patrols focused exclusively on gun detection through proactive patrol and did not respond to calls for service.</td>
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<td><strong>Youth Firearms Violence Initiative (10 cities)</strong></td>
<td>The program funded interventions directed at the increase in youth firearms violence. Jurisdictions were encouraged to employ community policing approaches in order to reduce the number of violent firearms crimes, firearm-related gang offenses, and firearm-related drug offenses. The cities proposed a mix of enforcement programs, prevention programs, and information systems enhancements. Some sites implemented primarily police-based enforcement strategies, while other sites emphasized prevention, community policing, and related approaches.</td>
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Professor Lawrence Sherman (2001), who has reviewed a large number of evaluations of crime prevention programs, including those targeting gun crimes, has arrived at some conclusions regarding what works in the prevention of firearm violence. He observes that policy-makers ought to consider the following facts that emerge from research:

- Most gun crimes are committed by non-felons and therefore criminal history is not a good predictor of future gun violence.
- Gun violence is concentrated in areas with the greatest economic inequality.
- Gun density is linked to gun injury and death. Density refers to the concentration of firearms in areas that are the most susceptible to violence. Density is more important than the overall volume or availability of guns in society. Those developing gun policy therefore must consider the impact of a policy on gun density.
- Most guns used in shootings are handguns that are often obtained illegally.

Sherman found that policies that work include uniformed police patrols in gun crime hot spots and background checks for criminal history to restrict gun sales in stores. He found that gun buyback programs do not work and that bans on private handgun possession and on the sale and manufacture of assault weapons are promising strategies. Sherman also identified policies that are worth testing, such as ammunition controls and national one-gun-a-month laws.

Evaluations of crime prevention programs are plagued by a number of factors that are beyond the control of evaluators. Many of these issues were apparent in the gun and gang violence program evaluations discussed in this report. Challenges in evaluating these programs included:

- **Data availability problems** — Ideally, evaluations benefit from more than one source of crime data. When official data alone are used to measure the outcome of an intervention, the impact may be masked or exaggerated by changes in the detection or recording of crimes by law enforcement agencies. Crime reporting levels, too, are sensitive to potential changes in public confidence brought about by a new crime prevention program. Data may also be lacking on other programs running concurrently with the program being evaluated. Survey data on public perceptions about the safety of the neighborhood may not be available.

- **Fidelity issues** — Many programs, including some of those covered in this review, have failed to implement a program as originally designed. For example, programs adopting a lever pulling approach or the Comprehensive Gang Model differed significantly in the manner in which they were implemented. Also, the Ceasefire projects, while sharing the same name, differed considerably with regard to the specific interventions used and the balance maintained between aggressive law enforcement tactics and social interventions.
Thus, prior to drawing conclusions across sites, one must ensure that programs bearing the same name are sufficiently similar to allow generalizations to be drawn.

It may be that the requirement of treatment fidelity and a problem-oriented approach may inherently be in conflict. A problem-oriented approach requires that an intervention be tailored to the nature, extent, and dynamics of a local crime problem. Thus, it is entirely appropriate to deviate somewhat from a model program. Tailoring a program to local conditions, however, creates challenges with regard to the validity of conclusions drawn from multisite evaluations.

- **Randomization**— True experiments involving random assignment to experimental and control zones are quite rare. Most evaluations are funded once a program has already been introduced. In any event, many programs that target gun and gang violence are implemented in the most crime-ridden sections of a city; hence, identifying comparable zones as a means of comparing the treatment and non-treatment areas may be difficult. In fact, there is an emphasis currently on focusing interventions in gun crime and gang hot spots, where a disproportionate number of homicides and serious crimes occur. Thus, random assignment is not possible unless a city has a number of these hot spots, in which case these areas can be randomly assigned to intervention and control zones.

- **Identifying appropriate control zones** – There are other issues with finding suitable control zones, apart from the problem of finding comparison areas where an intervention targets the most crime-ridden neighborhoods. Where an intervention aims at youth violence in an entire city, there obviously can be no control areas within that city. Statewide or national trends may provide a context for local trends but are inadequate for comparison purposes as the area in which an intervention takes place may differ dramatically, along demographic, social, and economic lines, from the state or country as a whole. Selecting nearby neighborhoods that are similar in rates of violence, family structure, education, unemployment rates, median income, and related variables is very challenging. For example, two neighboring areas with similar median income levels may be very different as one may be more homogenous and the other may have pockets of wealth amidst great poverty, producing similar median income levels. In reality, the two communities may be very different and conclusions drawn on the basis of their comparison may be spurious.

- **The displacement phenomenon** - Crime prevention programs, especially those involving aggressive police tactics, may displace or shift crime to neighboring areas or other crime types rather than simply reduce crime (Gabor, 1990). For example, a police crackdown on drug trafficking in Area “A”, may reduce trafficking in “A” but also shift this activity to adjacent Area “B” that has not been subject to this crackdown. By merely observing “A”,
evaluators may conclude the crackdown worked without realizing that some of the activity has merely been pushed out to “B”. Evaluators rarely consider this phenomenon. The true effect of the crackdown is the net effect—i.e., the decrease in drug offenses in “A” minus the increase in these offenses in “B”. Law enforcement activities may also lead offenders to alter their crimes (e.g., robbery to burglary) or to delay their crimes until an intervention is over (temporal displacement). Complex methodologies exist to determine whether crime has been displaced rather than reduced. Evaluations may be advised to use non-abutting areas as control/comparison zones as more distant neighborhoods are less likely to be affected adversely by the program (i.e., offenders flooding in from the treatment area). This is the case because the selection of a control zone in an outcome evaluation is designed to tell us what the crime situation would have been in the absence of the program.

- **Diffusion of benefits** – This phenomenon represents the opposite of displacement. Rather than shifting crime to abutting areas, it has been observed that some interventions, usually crime suppression and situational prevention measures, may provide benefits to nearby neighborhoods not covered by an intervention. This is the case because potential offenders may believe that the crackdown or related measure may also apply to their neighborhood. This phenomenon was not explicitly studied in any of the evaluations covered in this report.

- Other challenges for evaluators include **the simultaneous operation of multiple programs** in a community and the **sustainability of interventions**. A holistic analysis of a community and multiple outcome measures are required to identify the impact of each intervention operating simultaneously in a community. With regard to sustainability, a number of evaluations of gun and gang violence prevention programs have found that the multiagency collaborations and the targeted law enforcement efforts required in many programs are difficult to sustain in the long term. Although a program may still be formally operating, commitment may wane over time. Thus, fidelity assessments need to be applied on an ongoing basis to ensure that the intervention is still being implemented in accordance with its original design.
5.2 Weed and Seed

The Weed and Seed (W&S) strategy combats crime, drug trafficking, and drug-related crime through a combination of neighborhood revitalization, individual-level treatment, and crime/drug suppression measures. W&S targets high-crime neighborhoods that range in size from several blocks to 15 square miles. In early 2010, 256 sites were active in 46 states and 2 territories (Trudeau et al., 2010). Programs or initiatives that support W&S in Palm Beach County include: 1) specialized prosecution (COMBAT); 2) multijurisdictional law enforcement efforts; and 3) after school programs for young people that are designed to improve scholastic performance and to lower rates of involvement with the criminal justice system.

This report discusses and assesses two major national evaluation studies: 1) an evaluation of over 200 W&S sites conducted in 2010 and 2) a 1999 evaluation of eight sites and a total of 10 target areas (at two of the sites, W&S was implemented in two areas). Both evaluations were undertaken by independent firms and conducted original interviews of stakeholders, data analyses, and resident surveys. The 2010 study also conducted more in-depth analysis at 13 randomly selected “sentinel sites.” At these sites, resident perceptions of the crime problem, obtained through face-to-face interviews, were compared with those in a comparison area and site visits were conducted.
National Evaluation (2010)

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: High-crime neighborhoods

This national evaluation of over 200 W&S sites examined both the implementation and outcomes associated with this program.

METHOD/APPROACH
The investigators conducted a Web-based survey of W&S stakeholders, such as agency representatives or involved residents (1,353 respondents in 166 sites), and crime data submitted by grantees (203 sites). In addition, in 13 randomly selected “sentinel sites,” the evaluation developed a more detailed understanding by analyzing additional information derived from a survey of target and comparison area community residents (a total of 2,205 residents). Site visits included interviews with key stakeholders and the review of documents (e.g., grant applications, strategic plans, progress reports).

OUTCOME MEASURES
Stakeholder and resident perceptions of crime; stakeholders’ perceptions of substance abuse, unemployment and offender re-entry; property and violent crime rates.

FINDINGS:

- Overall, W&S sites implemented the strategy successfully.

- The length of the implementation of W&S was associated with improvements in resident perceptions of crime problems. Improvements in some outcomes were also associated with certain aspects of local W&S implementation (e.g. intensive enforcement; effective collaboration) but associations were not consistent across outcomes or areas of implementation assessed.
• Crime rates were higher in target areas than in surrounding jurisdictions, but this is due to the fact that W&S grants are typically located in high crime areas. The crime data indicated substantial decreases in robberies, burglaries, and aggravated assaults, with larger decreases in W&S target areas than in surrounding jurisdictions. Some crime rates decreased before W&S implementation, but after implementation these crime rates decreased more in target areas than in other parts of the jurisdictions.

• Stakeholders reported substantial decreases in the severity of problems following W&S, especially for problems directly related to crime. In particular, average ratings for drug sales and fear of crime each improved from ratings that indicated a major problem to ratings that indicated a moderate problem. Ratings also improved, to varying degrees, for all other crime-related problems.

• In the sentinel sites, crime problems were often rated worse by residents of the target area than by residents of the comparison areas as W&S is, by design, located in high-crime neighborhoods. However, residents in sentinel sites with longer W&S implementation periods reported that violence, robbery, and drug dealing were less of a problem than did residents in more recently implemented sites, suggesting that W&S contributed to improvements in resident perceptions of crime.

• The association between length of W&S implementation and reductions in the rate of aggravated assault approached statistical significance. The longer W&S had been implemented locally, the lower the rate of aggravated assault tended to be. Associations of length of W&S implementation and differences between target area and the surrounding jurisdiction robbery and burglary rates showed similar trends but were not as close to statistical significance.

• Stakeholder perceptions of problems, such as substance abuse, unemployment, and offender reentry, also showed improvement. Improvements were particularly noteworthy in the areas that had poor police-community relations, little resident engagement in neighborhood improvement activities, and a lack of services. Less improvement was reported on unemployment, poverty, lack of education, and lack of affordable housing, major issues that W&S addresses but cannot be expected to resolve, given the resources available and the time frame covered by the evaluation.

• Sentinel site residents were relatively pleased with the availability of activities and programs that W&S initiatives typically support, including crime prevention and substance abuse programs; recreational and other programs for youth; and neighborhood cleanup or
improvement activities. Conversely, target area residents viewed some aspects of police performance less favorably than did comparison area residents. For example, in six sites, target area residents reported more of a problem than comparison area residents regarding “police stopping too many people on the streets without good reason.” Despite these sentiments, target area residents were roughly as favorable as comparison area residents in reporting that the police were doing a good job keeping order and responding to community concerns.

- Greater reductions in rates of robbery and burglary were found in sites where stakeholders felt that their collaborations with local law enforcement had been more effective than in sites where stakeholders rated these collaborations as less effective.

- Sentinel site residents reported lower levels of problems with a variety of crimes when those sites’ stakeholders reported greater resident involvement in W&S.

- Similarly, sentinel site residents reported lower levels of problems with a variety of crimes in sites where stakeholders reported better W&S partnership functioning.

- Exploratory analyses of the extent to which stakeholder perceptions of improvements in crime problems were associated with aspects of local W&S implementation produced mixed results. The strongest set of associations involving stakeholder perceptions of improvement in crime was with law enforcement strategies and activities, in particular intensive enforcement of public disorder crimes. Other law enforcement strategies frequently associated with improvement in crime problems were firearms reduction strategies, gang reduction strategies, and intensive enforcement of violent crimes.

- Stakeholder perceptions of improvement in crime problems were also associated with frequency of collaboration with W&S partners. Improvements in problems relating to guns and weapons and of resident intimidation were commonly associated with frequency of collaboration.

- Sentinel site residents reported greater satisfaction with crime prevention in their neighborhood in sites where stakeholders reported greater effectiveness of collaboration with local law enforcement and with community policing partners. Also, target area residents reported greater satisfaction with activities to improve their neighborhood in sites where stakeholders reported greater effectiveness of collaboration involving local law enforcement, community policing officers, and resident partners.
COST OF PROGRAM

Beginning in 2007, funding at any site was limited to five years and $1 million over that term.

REFERENCE:

National Evaluation (1999)

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: High-crime neighborhoods

This evaluation examined both the implementation and outcomes of W&S at eight sites—Hartford (Connecticut), Manatee and Sarasota Counties (Florida), Shreveport, (Louisiana), Las Vegas (Nevada), Akron (Ohio), Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), Salt Lake City (Utah), and Seattle (Washington). At each site, the evaluation focused on one or two target areas with high rates of violent crime and, often, serious gang-related crime.

METHOD/APPROACH
The evaluators conducted individual interviews with key program administrators, senior law enforcement staff, managers of seeding organizations and activities, service providers (both current and former), and community leaders. The evaluators also analyzed incident-level crime and arrest records. Group interviews were undertaken with seeding program participants. In addition, resident surveys were conducted in target areas, in June, 1995 and in December, 1997.

OUTCOME MEASURES
Resident perceptions of crime, police performance and quality of life; crime and arrest data; participants’ views of the program.

FINDINGS:

• The effectiveness of weeding and seeding activities varied across the eight sites.

• The evaluation found that pre-existing community features can influence the effectiveness of W&S. Important features included the strength of the social and institutional infrastructure (an established network of community-based organizations and leaders), the severity of crime
problems, geographical advantages favoring economic development, and the transiency of the community’s residents.

- The mix of weeding and seeding activities and the sequencing of these components appeared to be critical in gaining community support for the program. Important positive factors included early seeding, sustained weeding, high-level task forces combined, and active prosecution.

- The program achieved greater success when resources were concentrated on smaller population groups.

- More successful programs were characterized by the active and constructive leadership of key individuals.

- The most effective implementation strategies were those that relied on bottom-up, participatory decision-making approaches, especially in conjunction with efforts to build capacity and partnership among local organizations.

- The evaluation identified several weak links in the chain, most noticeably the limited role that many local prosecutors played in the weeding process. Several local prosecutors indicated that they simply lacked the funding and personnel to conduct enhanced prosecution of the target area caseloads that were generated by more aggressive law enforcement activities. While hard to measure, this issue has likely impeded the removal of offenders from target areas.

- Most of the interviewees indicated that participation in the seeding programs has been a positive experience that helped them feel more secure emotionally and/or physically. The programs provided additional structure and discipline in the lives of target area youths and provided opportunities and assistance for adults seeking personal and professional growth.

- Several of the evaluation sites encountered early community resistance to W&S because residents were concerned about an exclusive focus on enforcement and potential harassment by the police. The lesson was that it was essential to involve residents early in program planning, to provide residents with substantial program authority, and to foster higher levels of interaction and trust between public-sector representatives and residents.

- In nine target areas, available data allowed a comparison of the number of Part I crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and auto theft) in the year prior to program implementation to the second year of W&S. Six of these areas showed declines: Stowe Village in Hartford, 46 percent; Crawford-Roberts (one neighborhood
within the Hill District) in Pittsburgh, 24 percent; North Manatee, 18 percent; the Shreveport target area, 11 percent; the Central District in Seattle, 10 percent; and West Las Vegas, 6 percent. Three target areas experienced increases in Part I crimes: South Manatee, 2 percent; Meadows Village in Las Vegas, 9 percent; and Salt Lake City, 14 percent. A comparable estimate was not possible for the Akron target area due to insufficient data.

- During this same time period, in seven target areas, Part I crime rates declined more or increased less than in the rest of the city or county.

- A relationship appeared to exist between crime trends and the concentration of program resources. Hartford had the smallest target area in terms of population and area, while Salt Lake City has the largest single target area in square miles and, along with Akron, the smallest level of Federal funding.

- Drug arrest rates followed the same pattern as the changes in the Part I crime rate. For example, among those six target areas for which there are arrest data, the four with decreases in Part I crime from the year prior to Weed and Seed through the second year of implementation (i.e., Hartford, Pittsburgh, North Manatee, and Shreveport) all experienced initial high rates of drug arrests—suggesting an initial period of intense weeding activities—followed by declining drug arrest rates. Assuming a fairly level of police enforcement, this trend reflects success in reducing drug activity. However, the Salt Lake City target area and South Manatee both experienced large increases in the number of drug arrests in 1997 compared with 1996, suggesting perhaps these sites had not yet succeeded in reducing the level of drug activity in the target areas. In the case of Salt Lake City, an influx of gang activity raised the question of whether the crime rate would have been even higher there without W&S.

- North Manatee and Pittsburgh exhibited substantial evidence of changes in residents’ perceptions on several outcome measures, including the severity of crime and police effectiveness in controlling crime. Akron, Hartford, and Seattle exhibited some evidence of changes in residents’ perceptions in relation to several categories of crime, either drug-related crime (Akron and Seattle) or violent and gang-related crime (Hartford). Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, and Shreveport exhibited little evidence of changes in residents’ perceptions of public safety overall or the severity of specific types of crime in the neighborhood.

- Pittsburgh and Hartford showed strong evidence of reduced Part I crimes and improved public perceptions on crime-related measures (e.g., reduction of fear of crime, public safety). Shreveport showed substantial evidence of reduced Part I crimes. Seattle, Akron, Las Vegas (West Las Vegas), and Manatee/Sarasota (South Manatee) showed some evidence of reduced
Part I crimes (Akron and Seattle also showed improved public perceptions.) Salt Lake City and Las Vegas (Meadows Village) showed no evidence of reduced Part I crimes.

**COST OF PROGRAM**

In 1999, sites received about $225,000 annually.

**REFERENCE:**

Assessment

Both of the national evaluations of W&S demonstrate that the strategy has considerable promise, especially when one considers that the strategy is implemented in communities with serious crime and drug problems. The numerous sites covered by both of the evaluations, especially the one published in 2010, lends greater credence to the overall finding that crime, violence, and substance abuse can be reduced through a combination of weeding and seeding. The reductions in crime at many of the sites, along with the rigorous evaluation methodology (especially at the 13 sentinel sites in the 2010), led us to rate Weed and Seed as a Promising program.

While Weed and Seed demonstrated effectiveness at several levels (rates of certain crimes, resident and stakeholder perceptions) and across over 200 jurisdictions, the fact that it is not a single program, but a broad strategy, differentiates it from a specific program that has been replicated and evaluated at several sites and that may qualify it as a model or exemplary program. Trudeau and his associates (2010) remind us that the outcomes observed are influenced by a wide array of factors, making it difficult to isolate the impact of any single intervention. The challenge is heightened when the intervention is not a uniform and limited program but a comprehensive strategy that takes on a different shape in different locations. Establishing linkages between implementation and outcomes is often difficult, particularly in evaluations of complex, multifaceted initiatives such as W&S. To achieve the possible status of a model or exemplary program, as defined by various established rating systems (Gabor, 2010), a smaller, more homogeneous set of Weed and Seed initiatives would need to be evaluated.

This said, outcomes with regard to the impact of W&S on crime appeared to be quite positive. The 2010 study found substantial decreases in robberies, burglaries, and aggravated assaults, with larger decreases in W&S target areas than in surrounding jurisdictions. The 1999 study revealed that 6 of 9 target areas with available data showed declines in Part 1 crimes following the introduction of W&S program.1 In seven target areas, Part I crime rates declined more or increased less than in the rest of the city or county. Drug arrests, too, declined in the majority of jurisdictions.

The perceptions of stakeholders, residents, and participants tended to be consistent with the crime data. The 2010 study found that stakeholders reported substantial decreases in the severity of problems following W&S and the 1999 study found improved resident perceptions of public

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1 Part 1 crimes, also known as Index crimes, are eight violent and property crimes used to measure crime and to determine crime trends. These crimes are: homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, auto theft, and arson.
safety in a number of jurisdictions. However, the 2010 evaluation revealed that target area residents reported more of a problem than comparison area residents regarding “police stopping too many people on the streets without good reason.” Nevertheless, target area residents were roughly as favorable as comparison area residents in reporting that the police were effective in maintaining order and in responding to community concerns.

Participants in the 1999 study indicated that the seeding programs were a positive experience. The programs appeared to provide structure and discipline in the lives of target area youths and provided support for adults seeking personal and professional growth.

The evaluation studies found that a number of factors were especially influential in the success of the program:

**Length of implementation** - The 2010 study found that residents in sentinel sites with longer W&S implementation periods reported that violence, robbery, and drug dealing were less of a problem than did residents in more recently implemented sites, suggesting that W&S contributed to improvements in resident perceptions of crime. The association between length of W&S implementation and reductions in the rate of aggravated assault approached statistical significance. The crimes of robbery and burglary showed a similar trend but the association was not statistically significant.

**Law enforcement strategies** – Intensive enforcement of public disorder and violent crimes was associated strongly with stakeholders’ perceptions of improvement in crime. Firearm and gang reduction strategies also appeared to influence stakeholders’ perceptions that crime problems had been mitigated.

**Effectiveness of collaboration with law enforcement and community policing partners** - The 2010 evaluation revealed that residents reported greater satisfaction with crime prevention and improvements in their neighborhood at sites where stakeholders reported a higher level of collaboration with law enforcement and other partners.

**Pre-existing community features** - Conditions prevailing prior to W&S were also found to be influential. The 1999 evaluation found that the strength of the social and institutional infrastructure (an established network of community-based organizations and active leaders), the severity of crime problems, geographical advantages favoring economic development, and the transiency of the community’s residents all played a role in the likelihood of program success.
**Participatory approaches** - The 1999 evaluation found that the most effective implementation strategies were those that relied on bottom-up, participatory decision-making approaches, especially in conjunction with efforts to build capacity and partnership among local organizations.

**Mix of weeding and seeding activities and their sequencing** - The 1999 study found that these elements were critical in gaining community support for the program. Important positive factors included early seeding, sustained weeding, high-level task forces combined, and active prosecution. There was early resistance to W&S due to the fear of police harassment and the belief that the strategy was exclusively a law enforcement approach. One conclusion was that residents need to be involved early and given decision-making authority in the program’s operation.

**Concentration of resources** - The program achieved greater success when resources were concentrated on smaller population groups.

**Prosecutorial resources** - The 1999 revealed the limited role that many local prosecutors played in the weeding process. Several local prosecutors indicated that they simply lack the funding and personnel to conduct enhanced prosecution in the target area that was generated by more aggressive law enforcement activities. While hard to measure, this issue has likely impeded the removal of offenders from target areas.

Thus, W&S appears to have produced some impressive results across a large number of sites. However, much like other interventions, it is dependent on targeted and sustained funding. The success of the strategy is also dependent on the pre-existing social and economic conditions, as well as institutional infrastructure, in communities in which W&S is implemented. In addition, the isolation of complex strategies, like W&S, poses a challenge as it is difficult to isolate the independent impact of the various program components.
5.3 Community Justice Centers/ Community Courts

These initiatives allow communities to respond to nonviolent crime, lower-level or nuisance crimes, and to substance abuse. They are the products of frustration by residents and business leaders in various communities that insufficient attention is being paid to such low-level crime. The community court addresses the root causes of crime by offering low level offenders access to social services for issues such as substance abuse, mental illness, and economic hardships. These centers also impose community-based sanctions, including projects that can help revitalize the community.
Midtown Community Court (New York City)

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Individuals committing quality-of-life offenses

In October 1993, the Midtown Community Court opened as a three-year demonstration project, in order to test the ability of criminal courts to develop closer links with the community and a collaborative, problem-solving approach to quality-of-life offenses. The aim was to provide effective and accessible justice for perpetrators of offenses such as prostitution, shoplifting, minor drug possession, turnstile jumping and disorderly conduct in Times Square and surrounding residential neighborhoods. The Midtown Community Court was formed due to the role these offenses play in eroding the quality of life and the inattention paid to these offenses by conventional courts. The project tested whether a community-based court could make case processing swifter, make justice visible to the community, encourage the enforcement of low-level offenses, marshal local resources, and help restore neighborhoods victimized by crime.

METHOD/APPROACH

The research design included measures of court performance (arrest-to-arraignment time, case outcomes, compliance with intermediate sanctions) and less conventional performance measures, such as patterns of local quality-of-life problems, community attitudes toward the Court, community perceptions of improvements in the quality of life. Community perceptions existing prior to the Court were compared with those following its implementation.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Case outcomes, compliance with intermediate sanctions, patterns in quality-of-life problems, and community attitudes.

FINDINGS:

- Justice was more swift as arrest-to-arraignment time averaged 18 hours at the Midtown Court compared to 30 hours at the downtown court.

- Justice was more visible as uniformed community service crews addressed local problem spots, $280,000 in community service work was provided to the neighborhood, there was
outreach to community groups, hosted tours and meetings at the courthouse, a quarterly newsletter, and broad media coverage.

• Project staff assembled nearly two dozen community-based partners that supervised neighborhood-based community service projects and provided a broad range of services — substance-abuse counseling, health education classes for prostitutes and their customers, GED classes, English classes, medical testing — at the courthouse itself.

• Community service orders more than doubled.

• Compliance with community service sentences increased by 50 percent.

• There was a substantial reduction in the concentration of street prostitution, unlicensed vending and graffiti in the Court’s target area.

• Sentencing at the Midtown Court produced significantly more intermediate sanctions than the downtown court. This was accomplished by reducing the frequency of case outcomes such as ‘time served’, ‘conditional discharge’ with no conditions specified and ‘adjournments in contemplation’ of dismissal with no conditions imposed.

• The broad use of intermediate sanctions was linked to a reduction in the use of short-term jail sentences (one to five days). Although the Midtown Court handed out fewer jail sentences than the downtown court, Midtown jail sentences were longer than those downtown.

• The Midtown Court contributed to improvements in quality-of-life conditions, according to ethnographic observations of local ‘hot spots,’ interviews with offenders, analysis of arrest data, focus group interviews and interviews with local police. Community leaders and residents pointed to substantial reductions in concentrations of prostitution and unlicensed vending.

• Arrests for prostitution in Midtown dropped by 56 percent over the first 18 months and arrests for unlicensed vending fell by 24 percent.

• Community leaders, residents and the police were impressed with the impact on quality of life problems such as prostitution and vandalism. Defendants viewed the Court as tough and fair and felt that they were treated with greater compassion.
COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

Cost-related information was not provided. Prosecutors did raise concerns about program costs.

REFERENCE:


An updated analysis of the Midtown Community Court in 2002 found the following (Hakuta et al., 2008):

“Similar to the results of the evaluation of its earlier years (Sviridoff et al, 2000, 2001), the Midtown Community Court continues to meet its goals of increasing the use of alternative sanctions and decreasing the use of other, more traditional responses to quality-of-life crime. Midtown was designed to hold its offenders accountable for their actions by sentencing them to perform immediate and visible community restitution within the Midtown neighborhood while providing social services to meet ongoing needs of the defendants. The results do indeed demonstrate that Midtown follows its philosophy of defendant accountability by mandating more alternative sanctions and fewer time served sentences and fines than downtown. The focus of Midtown sentences on alternative sanctions is in distinct contrast to the downtown court, whose sentences are more likely to fall on either extreme of the spectrum, including jail on one hand and sentences that do not entail any meaningful sanction at all (e.g. fines or time served) on the other.”
The Hartford Community Court focused on quality-of-life crimes as a strategy of reducing serious crimes—it is based on the Broken Windows theory that nuisance crimes, when ignored, lead to a cycle of decay in a community, resulting in more serious crime problems. Involving a collaboration between judges, community leaders, and local residents, the Court imposes alternative sanctions for violations that would ordinarily receive a fine or be dismissed. The key aims include: restoring the community through recognizing that communities are victims; using punishment to repay the community; combining punishment with social services/treatment help; and giving the community a voice in developing restorative sanctions.

**METHOD/APPROACH**

Focus groups were conducted with Court judicial and social services staff, police, neighborhood and community partners, and local business groups. Interviews were undertaken with key court and social services staff; political, religious, business and community leaders; and city/state government representatives. Exit interviews were conducted with 186 Court clients as they finished their community service.

**OUTCOME MEASURES**

Stakeholder attitudes.

**FINDINGS:**

- Overwhelming majorities of all participants, including clients, felt the Court was a good idea.
- The majority of clients (73%) felt their sentence was fair.
• Staff felt that reacting strongly to quality-of-life crimes prevents future offenses because offenders know these actions are going to be taken seriously. They liked the balance between punishment and help and agreed with the emphasis on accountability.

• Community service was performed throughout the city.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

Cost-related information was not provided.

**REFERENCE:**

Baltimore Community Justice Initiative

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown
TARGET POPULATION: Individuals committing quality-of-life offenses

This initiative aimed to reach both adults and youth, and sought to include a broad array of justice system agencies and community-based organizations. There were three principal components of the Initiative: focus on the justice system; conflict resolution in the school; and youth advocacy.

METHOD/APPRAOCH
Stakeholder interviews.

OUTCOME MEASURES
None to date.

FINDINGS:
This report was primarily a process evaluation. Accomplishments included:

• Creation of a Task Force that met quarterly to discuss common issues.
• Generated support in the criminal justice community for the idea of a community court.
• Obtained the commitment of a State Senator to sponsor legislation to implement a community court in Baltimore.
• Fostered an environment that enabled other community justice projects to emerge throughout the city, including a prostitution task force, a community prosecution project, a community defense program, and the creation of the Office of Problem-Solving Courts within the Maryland judiciary.
• Designed a School of Law Community Justice Clinic that allowed practicing attorneys the opportunity to help introduce future attorneys to community justice.
• Established a peer mediation conflict resolution program within a local high School.
• Created two youth advocacy programs.
COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

Cost-related information was not provided.

REFERENCE:

Seattle Municipal Community Court

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown
TARGET POPULATION: Individuals committing minor offenses

Seattle’s community court dealt with relatively minor offenses, such as theft, criminal trespass, prostitution, and failure to respond to a previous notice to appear in court on an ordinance violation charge. The community court in Seattle was designed specifically for repeat offenders. The community court is a post-plea program in which defendants can plead guilty and “opt-in” to community court for their sentence or proceed through the traditional court process. If a defendant opted into community court, he or she was sentenced to a short period of jurisdiction, usually thirty days, with conditions related to the community court (i.e., community service and making mandated service/treatment contacts). Participants were required to report to community court for a review hearing within fourteen days. Failure to comply with the terms of community court resulted in the immediate imposition of sanctions, usually an arrest warrant. If the defendant was not in compliance but appeared for their review hearing, the court could offer a defendant an additional short period of time to comply or impose short jail term.

The primary interventions in the Seattle Municipal Community Court are linkages to an array of treatment and social services, court-mandated participation in these services, and community service as restitution to the community.

METHOD/APPROACH
Quasi-experimental design with a pre-/post-test design and a control group.

OUTCOME MEASURES
Recidivism and seriousness of recidivism.

FINDINGS:

- Thirty percent of defendants successfully completed all of the sentence requirements.

- The community court produced a more expeditious court process with defendants entering the court an average of five days following arrest and entering a guilty plea and often passing sentencing on their first appearance.
• The community court is no more effective at stopping recidivism than is the traditional court process, as 80 percent of both groups committed a new offense within eighteen months of the intervention.

• The community court is significantly more effective at reducing the frequency of recidivism than is the traditional court process. The community court group committed 66% fewer offenses within 18 months of the intervention, while the control group showed an increase of 50%. The program appears to be most effective for Native American, Asian, African American, and Hispanic defendants.

• A more in-depth evaluation is needed to understand what factors may be associated with the finding that white males do not have as positive results as all other defendants in the community court.

• Additional consideration should be given to encouraging greater female participation in the community court as it is effective at reducing their rate of recidivism.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

There was an annual savings of $18,403 for public defense costs and, for 2005-2006, an estimated saving of $369,911 as a result of shorter jail stays for Community Court defendants.

**REFERENCE:**

Hennepin County Community Court

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Individuals committing low-level crimes

The Hennepin County Community Court began hearing cases in June, 1999. The Community Court was created in response to the general perception that low-level, non-personal crimes are of minor importance to the court. These offenses (e.g., damage to property, theft, and prostitution) are generally less serious in nature than high-profile felonies against persons, but can nonetheless impact community life. One of the primary sanctions for convicted Community Court defendants is a referral to the Sentencing to Service (STS) program, wherein defendants are required to perform community service. STS crews are led by crew leaders and defendants are required to work a full eight-hour day for each day they are sentenced. The STS sanction addresses the philosophy of restorative justice.

METHOD/APPROACH

Pre-/post-test design and a comparison with the remainder of Minneapolis for similar offenses.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Case processing, public satisfaction, defendant compliance rates, net costs.

FINDINGS:

- Community residents’ perceptions of safety have risen since the implementation of the Community Court.

- Average number of days from case filing to disposition was 36% less for Community Court cases than for the prior year's cases.

- Average number of days from arraignment to pretrial was 20% less for Community Court cases than for other Minneapolis cases for the same offenses during the same time period.
• Average number of hearings for Community Court cases rose as compared with the two comparison groups; however, this was a function of increased pre-disposition hearings required of many Community Court defendants.

• Average number of days sentenced to Sentencing to Service (STS) was the same for non-Community Court Minneapolis cases for the same offenses; however, defendant compliance with STS was nearly 25% higher for those sentenced in Community Court.

• Fewer Community Court defendants received warrants, went to revocation, or ended up with jail time for non-compliance with their STS sentences, as compared with defendants for similar offenses in the rest of Minneapolis.

• Interviews suggest that, in general, both defendants who received social services via the community court and service providers viewed the community court as beneficial. They saw it as having the potential to facilitate positive and meaningful life changes among some repeat low-level offenders.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

To implement the Community Justice Project, Hennepin County District Court received a $200,000 appropriation from the Minnesota State Legislature, plus a $25,000 planning grant and a subsequent renewable grant of $300,000 from the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance. The net costs of Community Court that were above and beyond the normal operations of criminal court against the valued benefit per case totaled $704.52.

**REFERENCE:**

Red Hook Community Justice Center

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Individuals committing misdemeanors

Red Hook, Brooklyn is New York’s second community-based court/justice center. Founded in 2000, the court is located in a neighborhood beset by crime, drugs, and unemployment. Paying back the community in the form of community service is a typical form of sanction informed. The Justice Center houses a variety of social services, including drug treatment, job training, mediation services, health care, and domestic violence counseling. It uses computers to track offender compliance with alternative sanctions and thereby assists judges in taking informed decisions.

METHOD/APPROACH

Compares defendants’ perceptions of fairness with those processed in a traditional criminal court. Nearly 400 defendants, who were seen at either Red Hook or the traditional court in 2005, took part in a survey comparing their perceptions of the treatment they received. The survey evaluated the effects of court location (Red Hook or the traditional court), defendant background (race, ethnicity, sex and socioeconomic status), the outcome of their current court case (dismissed or required to return to court; required to attend drug treatment or not), and the stage of their case at the time of the survey (arraignment or subsequent court appearance). Structured courtroom observations were also undertaken to better understand defendants’ perceptions as the fairness of the process.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Defendants’ perceptions of fairness, case outcome.
FINDINGS:

• The community court was considered to be more fair than the traditional court.

• Defendants’ perceptions of the judge was the best predictor of their overall view of the fairness of the court.

• The quality of communication that defendants experienced in the courtroom was the most important factor in their view of the fairness of the process. Allowing defendants to express their own perspectives was a key factor in their view of the court’s fairness.

• Defendant perceptions of fairness varied less across race and social class than was the case in traditional court.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

Community courts or justice centers focus on quality-of-life offenses (e.g., drug possession, shoplifting, vandalism, and prostitution). Many of these courts have combined punishment and assistance, by sentencing low-level offenders to perform visible community restitution and offering on-site social services, including drug treatment, counseling, and job training. These community courts seek to achieve many goals, such as reduced crime, increased engagement between citizens and the courts, improved perceptions of neighborhood safety, and a greater level of accountability for low-level, "quality-of-life" offenders. The focus on low-level crime is based on the “Broken Windows” theory, the idea that disregarding quality-of-life crime can create decay and a downward spiral of a community, resulting in more serious crime, as well as economic, and social problems.

Three of the six programs identified were rated here as “Promising” and three were rated as “Unknown”. The rating of half the programs evaluated as Unknown reflects the fact that these evaluations were not comprehensive ones that examined case processing, defendant compliance rates, recidivism, costs, and the impact on the community as a whole. A variety of methodologies have been used to evaluate community courts. The most common is some form of community survey (e.g, phone interviews, door-to-door surveys, focus groups) designed to measure community perceptions of community court success. This was the primary method of the Red Hook study. The Hennepin, Midtown, and Hartford studies included offender interviews or focus groups and utilized stakeholder interviews to gather the perceptions and opinions of court staff and treatment providers. The Hennepin, Seattle, and Midtown studies also gathered administrative court data to do larger-scale quantitative analysis.

Defendant compliance rates were found to be higher than in traditional courts. The use of intermediate sanctions meant that fewer offenders merely “walked” and escaped accountability. This fact, along with faster processing times, likely contributed to a deterrent effect, increasing compliance rates and lowering recidivism. The Midtown study found that prostitution arrests were down 56 percent and illegal vending arrests were down 24 percent following the opening of the community court. The Seattle study showed a dramatic reduction in the frequency but not the rate of recidivism. That study also found that the impact of the study was greater for minorities. The issue of recidivism and potential differences by race require exploration in future evaluation studies.
The community courts were consistently viewed as more fair than traditional courts. In Red Hook, the perceptions of fairness were more similar across race and class than was the case with regard to traditional courts.

Cases were generally processed more efficiently in community court than in traditional court. The Midtown study documents speedier case processing, as does the 2000 Hennepin study. For example, in the first three years that the Midtown Court was open, the average arrest-to-arraignment time was 18.9 hours compared to 29.2 hours at the downtown Manhattan court. The Hennepin Court also achieved quicker case processing, even though more appearances were required before disposition. The author of the Hennepin study speculate that the increased number of appearances in the community court was primarily due to the increased number of compliance monitoring appearances needed to hold offenders accountable.

Community courts rely heavily on the sanction of community service. This has led to a perception that communities are being cleaned up and, along with it, the view by the public that affected neighborhoods are safer. Many community members in Midtown and Hennepin reported that they were willing to reallocate their tax dollars, or even pay more in taxes, to support a community court.

With regard to the cost of community courts, the Seattle study found that there were savings due to fewer short jail terms and lower public defense costs. The Hennepin study, on the other hand, found there were net costs associated with the community court; but the authors noted that there are many additional benefits that cannot be quantified in monetary value to offset the costs. The only benefit that was included in the Hennepin cost-benefit analysis was the value of community service performed by defendants. Other benefits included the improved quality of life in the neighborhood and the improved quality and efficiency of decision-making due to increased information sharing.

The Midtown study included a cost-benefit analysis, as well, but that analysis is, by the authors’ own admission, limited due to lack of ability to quantify all benefits and costs. The Midtown study did find significant monetary benefits to the court system—including approximately $100,000 in reduced costs due to decreased pre-arraignment detention, $500,000 in reduced costs due to a reduced use of jail, $570,000 in future reduced costs due to reduced prostitution arrests, and $150,000 in benefits derived from the community service of defendants—for a total of approximately $1.3 million annually.
5.4 Drug Courts

Drug courts (criminal) are designed to stop the abuse of alcohol, drugs, and related criminal activity. They generally deal with nonviolent drug related cases. They depend upon a close collaborative relationship between criminal justice professionals and those who provide drug treatment. A collaborative atmosphere prevails, in which the judge heads a team of court staff, attorneys, probation officers, and treatment professionals that supports and monitors a participant's progress toward recovery. The team maintains a critical balance of authority, supervision, and support. Drug court programs require intensive supervision based on frequent drug testing and court appearances, along with tightly structured regimens of treatment and recovery services. Such supervision allows the program to provide the requisite support and to react promptly to impose therapeutic or criminal sanctions when participants fail to comply with the program.

Palm Beach County also operates a Civil Drug Court in Riviera Beach. The mission of this court is to prevent and reduce crimes associated with substance abuse. The initiative is designed to reach individuals in need of court ordered services, who are either unable to recognize their need for treatment and/or unable to obtain the treatment service. Chapter 397 of the Florida Statutes, the Hal S. Marchman Alcohol and Other Drug Services Act of 1993, provides procedures for lay persons to seek help from the court when a person is believed to be impaired due to substance abuse. The person can petition successfully for involuntary assessment of another if the petitioner can show that the other person is so impaired by substance abuse that the respondent may physically harm themselves or others, or that the respondent cannot care for himself.

This section of the report covers evaluations conducted since the 2005 review by the Government Accountability Office.
Erie and Niagara DWI/Drug Courts

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown

TARGET POPULATION: Persistent DWI offenders

In 2007, the New York State Unified Court System launched hybrid DWI/drug courts in Erie and Niagara Counties to address the issue of persistent driving while intoxicated (DWI). The courts, based on the drug court model, target nonviolent felony DWI offenders who have at least one prior DWI conviction and who are identified as having an alcohol abuse problem.

METHOD/APPRAOCH

This evaluation study examined the impact of the Erie and Niagara courts on re-arrest and case processing. Outcomes were compared between 90 DWI court participants and 259 similar defendants sentenced by judges in Erie and Niagara. Weighting techniques were implemented to adjust for differences in current charges, criminal history, and key demographic characteristics. In addition, the study examined compliance rates and alcohol use outcomes among the participant sample.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Case processing and recidivism (re-arrest).

FINDINGS:

- Overall re-arrest rates were low among both the DWI court participants and the comparison sample. Less than 1% of both samples had been re-arrested at three months post-sentence. Slightly more comparison defendants than DWI court participants had been re-arrested at both six months (2% versus 4%) and one year (5% versus 8%) post-sentence. While not statistically significant, these results suggest a possible positive effect of the DWI court program. The results further suggest that DWI court participants may be slightly more likely to have a new DWI re-arrest at six months and one year, although these results were not statistically significant.
• Defendants in both the participant and comparison samples took over eight months on average to reach disposition.

• The majority (75%) of DWI court participants included in the evaluation were still actively enrolled in the program at the time of the analysis. The majority (83%) of those no longer active had successfully graduated. Only three defendants (13%) failed the program outright and were resentenced. One additional defendant entered the court pre-plea.

• Despite constant blood alcohol monitoring via an ankle monitor and frequent drug screening, very few DWI court participants tested positive for alcohol (3%) or drugs (7%). Nine percent of defendants tried to tamper with the screening device, suggesting an intent to ingest alcohol.

• Older DWI court participants were somewhat more likely to have a noncompliant incident (i.e., positive drug or alcohol screen, removal or blocking of the required monitoring anklet, or program failure).

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**

Hennepin County (MN) Drug Court

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown
TARGET POPULATION: Felony level drug offenders

This court was available for felony level drug offenders as well as other offenders who have been deemed to have committed offenses, such as prostitution or forgery, that were motivated by drug dependency. The program had three tracks: diversion, post-conviction not referred to treatment, and post-conviction referred to treatment. Aside from treatment, the court can require random drug testing and attendance of education classes.

METHOD/APPROACH

Offenders participating in drug court were compared with a similar population prior to the establishment of the drug court.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Case processing, reduction in drug use, employment, treatment completion rates, and criminal recidivism.

FINDINGS:

- Average time from booking to first appearance was less than two days, a substantial reduction from the pre-Drug Court baseline period. The average number of appearances was three, roughly half of the previous average.

- Treatment completion rates were higher than completion rates of clients admitted to the same programs in the pre-Drug court period (56.5% versus 47.3%).

- The only goal not achieved was shortening the case length to three weeks. An average case lasted four weeks, one week longer than was desired. Prior to Drug court, case lengths ranged from 120 to 180 days.
• Drug Court participants were found to have reduced their usage of drugs. However, program participants were found to have a similar overall recidivism rate as the pre-Drug Court comparison group. Therefore, the goal of reducing recidivism was not met.

• There is an apparent relationship between criminal history and the recidivism rate. There was a major increase in the recidivism rate among offenders in Drug Court with three or more prior convictions.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**

Hillsborough County (FL) Drug Court

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Drug involved offenders

This study examined the long-term impact of drug court participation (compared to regular probation) on the likelihood of recidivism of drug-involved offenders under supervision in Hillsborough County, Florida. A total of 475 of these offenders were recruited for the evaluation study, 274 of whom (58%) were enrolled in drug court. The Hillsborough drug court had a pretrial intervention program, as well as a post-conviction track. Participation in the pre-trial intervention program involved 12–18 months of status hearings, urine testing at least once a week, and several treatment components, including screening, individual counseling, group counseling, and outside self-help meetings. Participation in the post-conviction program involved 24–36 months of status hearings, drug-offender probation or community control, random drug testing, and an array of treatment components. Drug court participants in this study were enrolled in either the pre-trial or the post-conviction program.

METHOD/APPROACH

The study used a combination of self-reported data (collected through in-person interviews at the beginning of supervision) and administrative records. It compared the likelihood of re-arrest for drug court participants and a matched sample of comparison offenders over five six-month time periods from the beginning of supervision to 30 months past that date.

OUTCOME MEASURES

The likelihood of recidivism.

FINDINGS:

- The results indicate that participation in drug court is associated with a significant decrease in the likelihood of recidivism in the 12–18 months following the onset of supervision.
• Although drug court was associated with decreased likelihood of recidivism in the other time periods, the association was not significant. The impact of drug court appears to be delayed (until the 12-18 month time period). In addition, the “drug court effect” is not sustained beyond that time period.

• The fact that significant program effects were observed during a time period that coincides with the conclusion of drug court participation for graduates and a time period well beyond initial program exposure, suggests that drug court participants are more likely than comparable offenders not exposed to drug court to remain arrest free when they are no longer under community supervision.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

In January 2002, the Queens Misdemeanor Treatment Court (QMTC) opened in Queens County, New York to provide an alternative to incarceration for drug-addicted, chronic misdemeanor offenders. Eligible defendants had a drug dependency, faced misdemeanor charges, and had at least three prior nonviolent misdemeanor convictions. Drug court participation lasted a minimum of nine months. QMTC graduates had the criminal charges against them dismissed, while those who failed received a jail sentence of an exact length negotiated in advance of participation (usually four months). QMTC followed a traditional drug court model with multiple program phases, case management, regular judicial status hearings, sanctions and rewards, and jail for those who fail. The QMTC applied the drug court model to a population that would otherwise receive relatively little jail time.

METHOD/APPROACH

Outcomes were compared between 335 Treatment Court participants and a matched sample of 335 similar defendants arrested in Queens County, New York in the two years before the Court opened. The comparison group was carefully matched to participants to ensure comparability in their current charges, criminal history, and key demographic characteristics, such as age, sex, and race/ethnicity.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Recidivism, case processing, and sentencing outcomes.

FINDINGS:

- QMTC produced a significant reduction in the re-arrest rate across two-year and three-year tracking periods following the initial arrest. After two years, 71 percent of drug court participants versus 85 percent of the comparison group were rearrested; and after three years, the difference was 79 percent versus 89 percent.
• The QMTC also produced a significant reduction in the average total number of re-arrests: 1.8 versus 2.9 after two years and 2.8 versus 3.9 after three years.

• QMTC produced a substantial reduction in post-program recidivism—47 percent of drug court participants versus 73 percent of the comparison group were re-arrested within one year of program exit. Just 37 percent of graduates, as compared with 59 percent of failures, were re-arrested within one year post-program, indicating that the benefits of the drug court appear to be even more pronounced for those successfully completing the program.

• Among those who did re-offend, QMTC participants averaged significantly more crime-free days prior to their first re-arrest.

• The QMTC did not produce a reduction in case processing time from arrest to disposition/drug court entry. The majority of comparison group defendants had their cases disposed at arraignment (within one day), due to the misdemeanor level of their offense. When isolating those cases that were not disposed at arraignment, the average number of days from arrest to disposition for the comparison group was significantly higher than for drug court participants.

• The comparison group was significantly more likely to receive jail time on the initial case than participants in the drug court (56 percent vs. 48 percent). However, the average number of days sentenced to jail was significantly higher in the drug court (74 vs. 18 days), due to the longer sentences served by drug court failures. Those who graduated from the drug court did not receive any jail time.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

Kalamazoo County Adult Drug Treatment Court

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Nonviolent drug offenders

In June 1992, the first women’s drug treatment court in the nation was established in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In the late 1980s, females were the fastest growing segment of the offender population and many of their offenses were non-violent drug crimes. The Kalamazoo Adult Drug Treatment Court Program (KADTC) initially began as a demonstration project and the female program has benefited from strong community support. In 1997, a program for male offenders was added to the Drug Treatment Court Program through an expansion grant from the U.S. Department of Justice.

METHOD/APPROACH

A sample of participants was selected from among those who entered Drug Court from January 2002 through December 2003. A comparison group was identified from those individuals who were referred to the KADTC but had not enrolled for a variety of reasons. The two groups were matched on age, gender, ethnicity, and criminal history. Both groups were examined through administrative databases for a period up to 24 months from the date of Drug Court entry.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Recidivism, substance abuse, program completion, program cost.

FINDINGS:

- KADTC participants reduced their drug use (as indicated by drug tests) steadily over the first 12 months following their entry into the program.

- Participants were significantly less likely to be re-arrested than the comparison group over a 24-month period following entry into the program.

- Due to positive outcomes for drug court participants (including fewer re-arrests, less probation time and fewer new court cases), there were substantial avoided costs for drug court participants.
COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

Summing the amount saved for both the men’s and women’s program creates a combined total of $593,154 saved over just a two-year period. This number includes all program participants in the sample, regardless of whether they graduated from the program. Many of these savings are due to positive outcomes while the participant is still in the program. If Drug Court participants continue to have positive outcomes in subsequent years, then these cost savings can be expected to continue to accrue over time, repaying the program investment costs and providing further avoided costs to public agencies.

REFERENCE:

Staten Island Treatment Court

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Drug addicted nonviolent, first-time felony offenders

In March 2002, the Staten Island Treatment Court (SITC) opened to provide an alternative to incarceration for drug-addicted felony offenders. The SITC accepted nonviolent, first-time felony offenders who were arrested on narcotics charges and were addicted or abusing drugs. The SITC has multiple program phases, case management, sanctions and rewards, and jail for those who fail. The dedicated SITC team follows each participant closely through regular contact with case managers, frequent appearances before the judge, and implementation of sanctions and rewards in response to participant behavior and needs. In addition to remaining drug-free for a specific period of time and completing treatment, participants must make measurable progress toward personal goals, such as education or employment. SITC team members, including the judge, frequently address obstacles to personal achievements and the court requires participants to contemplate personal goals and success in multiple interviews during their participation in the program.

METHOD/APPROACH

Outcomes were compared between the first 146 SITC participants and a matched sample of 146 similar defendants arrested in Staten Island in the year before the SITC opened. The “comparison group” was matched to participants to ensure comparability in their current charges, prior criminal history, and key demographic characteristics, such as age, sex, and race/ethnicity.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Recidivism, time to re-arrest, program retention rates, and case processing.
FINDINGS:

- SITC achieved a retention rate of 95% at 90 days to 77% retention at two years post-enrollment.

- The program produced a 46% reduction in the re-arrest rate within one year of the initial arrest and a 25% reduction within 18 months. The average number of re-arrests within the 18-month tracking period went from 1.19 for the comparison group to 0.63 for drug court participants.

- Among those who did re-offend, SITC participants averaged significantly more crime-free days to their first re-arrest within the 18-month tracking period.

- SITC was successful in reducing the time that defendants spent in flux between their arrest and initial disposition. Aside from serving the goal of efficiency, this outcome is important for achieving the goal of reaching defendants rapidly during the crisis period created by their initial arrest as they may be especially open to treatment or to other lifestyle changes.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

New Castle County (Delaware) Superior Court

PROGRAM RATING: Not applicable

TARGET POPULATION: Probation violators with a substance abuse problem

This study was based on the 452 consecutive admissions to the probation violators track of the New Castle County (Wilmington) Delaware Superior Court drug court between October 1993 and March 1997. The probation violators track of the drug court is designed for Superior Court probation clients who are arrested for a new criminal offense while serving their term. Probation violators who are assessed to have a substance abuse problem enter a guilty plea and are sentenced to participate in the drug court program. Delaware’s Treatment Access Center (TASC) is responsible for program placement, monitoring, and the representation of these drug court clients. The drug court program requires that clients appear regularly before the drug court judge during status hearings, attend treatment sessions, and meet weekly with their probation officer and TASC worker. The length of the program varies according to participant progress. Those who are doing well may get through the program in 9-12 months, whereas others may take significantly longer. Sanctions imposed by the judge for program violations, such as repeated positive urine screens or missed treatment and/or court sessions, may include moving the participant to a more restrictive level of probation or briefly placing the participant in jail of probation. Those satisfying all the requirements of the program may be granted reductions in their sentence. Participants who are charged with a new crime and those who receive multiple sanctions for noncompliance may be terminated by the judge.

METHOD/APPROACH

The study sought to determine whether there is a difference in the recidivism rates of violent and nonviolent offenders in drug court. The initial analysis of recidivism data involved computing descriptive statistics to determine the proportion of drug court participants that had been rearrested for all offenses, for felony and misdemeanor offenses, and for specific categories of offenses. Next, to assess the bivariate relationship between violent offense history and the different measures of recidivism, a series of chi-squares were calculated comparing the re-arrest rate of those with and without a violent offense history. Bivariate correlations were also calculated to assess the relationships between socio-demographic, criminal history and status variables, and recidivism. The final analytic step involved constructing multivariate logistic
regression models using several variables (e.g., age, gender, criminal history) frequently found to be related to recidivism as statistical controls to determine whether violent offense history showed a statistically significant relationship with recidivism.

OUTCOME MEASURES
Recidivism (re-arrest rate).

FINDINGS:

• Although current findings showed that there was a significant bivariate relationship between violent offense history and recidivism, when this was examined in a multivariate context that controlled for time at risk, number of lifetime charges, socio-demographic variables, and drug court discharge status, it was found that offenders with a history of violence were statistically no more likely than those with no history of violent offending to be rearrested during the post-drug court follow-up period. This was true of all types of rearrests examined, including felony, drug, property, and violent arrests.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION
No information provided.

REFERENCE:
Multiple Drug Courts in Idaho

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown

TARGET POPULATION: Female, drug-dependent offenders

The multi-site drug court program in Idaho was a court-supervised, comprehensive outpatient treatment program for eligible chemically dependent defendants. The program combined accelerated case management, ongoing court involvement, and community-based drug treatment. Services and interventions included regular drug testing, periodic one-on-one contact with the drug court judge in the form of status review hearings, and placement in community-based drug treatment programming. Throughout each phase of the program, counselors assisted participants in obtaining education and skills assessments and provided referrals for vocational training, education and/or job placement services.

METHOD/APPROACH

Non-equivalent control group design.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Recidivism.

FINDINGS:

- When compared to traditional probationers, women in drug court were significantly less likely to recidivate over a long term follow-up (an average period of two years).
COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

Assessment

By 2007, drug courts were in all 50 states with nearly 1,700 adult drug courts in operation and over 300 more in the planning stages. Of the eight programs covered in this review, four were rated as “Promising”, three as “Unknown”, and one was “Not Applicable”. The majority of evaluations conducted from 2005 indicate that drug courts have reduced the criminal recidivism of those processed in these courts. This concurs with a finding of the Government Accountability Office (2005) which was based on a review of 23 evaluations undertaken up to 2005. The Hillsborough County study also examined the sustainability of the impact on recidivism and found a decay in the impact after 18 months, while the Queens study showed an impact on both the re-arrest rate and on the volume of arrests up to three years following entry into the drug court.

The Idaho study found that the reduction of recidivism also applied to women, although this study used a small sample and a nonequivalent control group design that is vulnerable to selection biases—i.e., the treatment and comparison groups may have been different prior to the intervention, thereby making it difficult to attribute post-intervention differences to the drug courts in that state. The New Castle County study found that offenders with a history of violence did not display a higher recidivism rate during their post-drug court follow-up than did those without such a history, when other factors (e.g., demographic factors) were statistically controlled.

The Erie/Niagara and Kalamazoo studies found that substance abuse had declined following entry into drug court. The GAO’s earlier review reported mixed results on substance use relapse. For example, drug test results generally showed significant reductions in use during participation in the program, while self-reported results generally showed no significant reductions in use.

Erie/Niagara and Staten Island showed good program retention and compliance rates. The GAO’s earlier review found that successful program completion rates ranged from 27%-66%.

The results were mixed with regard to case processing—the time elapsing between arrest and disposition/drug court entry. The Staten Island drug court was found to speed up case processing, while the Queens court did not speed up processing.
The Kalamazoo study undertook an analysis of the costs and benefits of drug court and found that this court produced a significant saving due, in part, to the crime lowering effect of the court. The GAO study found that while the cost of these programs was generally greater than the costs to provide criminal justice services to the comparison group, all seven programs with cost data yielded positive net benefits, primarily due to the fact that reductions in recidivism affected judicial system costs and avoided costs to potential victims. Financial cost savings for the criminal justice system (taking into account recidivism reductions) were found in two of the seven programs with cost data.
5.5 Mental Health Courts

While there are no mental health courts in Palm Beach County, there are “special dockets” where cases are occasionally heard. Mental health courts are a recent development. They require collaboration on the part of both criminal justice and mental health practitioners. Typically, these courts involve judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and other court personnel who possess expertise in the area of mental health issues. These courts generally deal with nonviolent offenders who have been diagnosed with a mental illness or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders. Their purpose is to decrease the justice system contacts of clients by providing resources to improve their social functioning and to connect them with employment, treatment, and social services. These courts provide continuing judicial supervision—including periodic review—to qualified offenders with mental illness, mental retardation, or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders who are charged with misdemeanors and/or nonviolent offenses.
Broward County Mental Health Court

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Nonviolent misdemeanor defendants with a mental illness or developmental disability

Broward County's mental health court was established in 1997. It was the first such court in the nation. It is a voluntary pre-adjudication program, diverting people into treatment before they face trial if they agree to follow the court's direction. Potential clients are usually identified and referred to the court within 24 hours of arrest. Multiple stakeholders may refer people to the MHC, including judges, family, mental health professionals, and jail or probation staff. The majority of cases are referred to the MHC from the daily magistrate court, with people often seen in the MHC the same day as their magistrate hearing. Screening is conducted by a psychiatrist or by doctoral students who are assigned to the Public Defender's office. These jail screening and pre-court evaluations determine whether a defendant is eligible to participate in the mental health court, is legally competent, or needs to be admitted involuntarily to a hospital. Once deemed competent and eligible for participation, and after providing consent, the defendant, his family, court personnel, and clinicians determine the services the defendant needs. Most are referred to local community mental health centers where a variety of treatments are available. The court maintains a residential facility on the grounds of one of these centers for homeless defendants. Court monitors receive periodic reports from treatment providers and the court holds periodic reviews during the treatment period to make adjustments where necessary. If the court determines a defendant has made sufficient progress it “withholds” his adjudication, meaning there is a record of the arrest and court disposition, but no judgment is entered.

METHOD/APPROACH

Participants were 116 Broward County Mental Health Court defendants whose initial hearing dates were between December, 1999, and April 4, 2001, and a matched sample of 101 persons with mental illness whose first appearance hearing in Hillsborough County (Tampa), FL court was between March 15, 2000, and May 2, 2001. A quasi-experimental design using a matched control group from a different jurisdiction was used as the Broward County public defender believed strongly that the mental health court was in many cases a better court for defendants who were eligible for the court than traditional misdemeanor court. Thus, a suitable comparison group within Broward County group was hard to find.
OUTCOME MEASURES
Time spent in jail, recidivism, speed of recidivism.

FINDINGS:

• Time spent in jail for Mental Health Court clients was significantly lower than that of similarly situated misdemeanant clients with mental illness in the comparison county with no mental health court. Time spent in jail was also substantially lower than the average reported number of jail days for defendants with mental illness in Broward County prior to the introduction of the Court.

• Self-report data on aggressive or violent acts did not suggest significantly higher rates of problem behavior for the MHC sample.

• There were fewer arrests from pre-enrollment to post-enrollment (1.5 versus 1.0) for study participants and fewer average days spent in jail (3 days) as compared to an average of 23 days) for similar individuals prior to the creation of the MHC.

• MHC clients had similar survival time to re-arrest up to one year after study enrollment.

• MHC clients did not significantly differ from the comparison group in self-reported aggressive acts over an 8-month follow-up period.

• MHC clients self-reported significantly fewer acts of violence than the comparison group at the 8 month follow-up.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION
No information provided.

REFERENCE:
King County Mental Health Court

PROGRAM RATING: Promising with qualifications due to lack of a comparison group

TARGET POPULATION: Misdemeanor defendants with mental illness

The goal of the King County Mental Health Court is to enhance public safety and to humanely deal with individuals with mental disorders who come in contact with the justice system. In the Mental Health Court, incarceration is the exception, rather than the rule. The Court offers misdemeanor defendants with mental illnesses a single point of contact. The defendant works with the judge, prosecutor, public defenders, treatment court liaison, and probation officers.

Defendants may be referred to the Mental Health Court from a variety of different sources, including jail staff, police, attorneys, family members, advocacy groups, probation officers, or by another District court. In addition, the Mental Health Court handles all cases in which competency is an issue for the District Courts. Participation in the program is voluntary, as defendants may be asked to waive their rights to a trial on the merits of the case and enter into a diversion or plea agreement, with a community-based treatment emphasis. A court liaison to the treatment community is present at all hearings and is responsible for linking the defendant with appropriate services and for developing an initial treatment plan with the treating agency. Defendants participate in court ordered treatment plans and successful participation may result in dismissed charges, early case closure, or reduced sentencing. Defendants are placed on probation and the case is assigned to a probation officer specializing in mental health issues. These probation officers carry reduced caseloads in order to be able to provide a more intensive level of supervision to this high-needs population.

METHOD/APPROACH

Pre-post intervention comparison without a comparison group. A client survey was also undertaken.
OUTCOME MEASURES
Recidivism, violence, client satisfaction.

FINDINGS:
- King County Mental Health Court appeared to reduce recidivism—there was a 75.9% decrease in the number of offenses committed one year after graduation from the mental health court.
- There was an 87.9% decrease in the percentage of violent offenses committed by the Court’s graduates.
- Preliminary results from the client satisfaction survey revealed a strong level of support for the MHC from its client participants. When asked their overall impression of the MHC, 61.5% found it to be Very Good and 38.5% rated it as Good. None of the respondents were dissatisfied with the MHC. Over 92% maintained contact or reconnected with their family members.
- Over 90% felt that their life was better after their involvement with the MHC and 92.3% would opt in to the court if given another chance.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION
No information provided.

REFERENCE:
Santa Barbara County Mental Health Treatment Court

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown
TARGET POPULATION: Nonviolent, mentally ill offenders

This Mental Health Treatment Court (MHTC) provided non-adversarial criminal processing in conjunction with diversion to mental health services that used an assertive community treatment (ACT) approach to case management. Decisions regarding participants were made by a treatment team that met before each court session, with the Judge subsequently providing feedback to the offender. Participants were assigned a case manager within an intensive care team. Following an ACT model of intervention, case managers had frequent contact with their clients and helped them with their practical and emotional needs. Participants in the MHTC also had access to housing, a horticulture vocational training program, group substance abuse treatment, and community integration. Participants received the intensive treatment for 18 months, after which, if necessary, they were referred to long-term county services.

METHOD/APPROACH

This study followed a true experimental design. All offenders during a three-year period who were identified as eligible for the program could participate. Those who agreed were assessed and randomly assigned to one of two treatment conditions: the MHTC with intensive case management or treatment as usual (TAU).

OUTCOME MEASURES

Time spent in jail, recidivism, reduction in drug use, psychological distress.

FINDINGS:

- Criminal activity was reduced for some categories of participants. Approximately 10% of participants in each group ended up in prison, despite ongoing treatment efforts. Further, an additional 10% of participants with the highest number of post-treatment jail days accounted
for over 50% of all jail days accrued after entering the program. While there were statistically significant reductions in jail time for the remaining offenders, those who were not helped appeared to get worse over time.

- Participants in MHTC demonstrated a greater reduction in psychological distress and drug problems than did participants in TAU. Although gains for MHTC participants declined after the program ended, functioning tended to remain higher than for participants in TAU, although both groups functioned higher at the end of 24 months than they had at baseline.

- Although more participants in the MHTC than in TAU were actively engaged in treatment during the program, overall both MHTC and TAU participants increased their use of county services compared to their use prior to their entry into the program.

- The intensity of service (i.e., treatment hours) did not appear to influence participant outcomes.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**

Clark County (WS) Mental Health Court

PROGRAM RATING: Promising, with qualifications, due to the lack of a comparison group

TARGET POPULATION: Misdemeanor offenders with a mental illness

The Mental Health Court (MHC) in Clark County was established in April 2000 to improve outcomes for mentally ill people caught up in the criminal justice process. The Mentally Ill Re-arrest Prevention Program (MIRAP) offers enhanced services by increasing mental health court coordination staff, increasing the number of mental health court judges, and contracting with two local mental health service providers to provide intensive case management to participants. Critical to this approach is a system of proactively scheduled court reviews and non-adversarial interactive hearings. MHC clients are evaluated at least monthly and assessed to determine the proper level of support and court intervention. To achieve positive outcomes, the court also serves as a clearinghouse for resources and attempts to coordinate services available for the MHC client. One of the immediate goals of the Clark County Mental Health Court was to reduce the number of individuals with mental illness in the criminal system and provide the necessary community services to sustain MHC clients in the community. The Clark County MHC was initially offered on a pre-plea basis. The program is now offered post-plea. Clients must plead guilty to their charges which are expunged upon graduation from the MHC.

METHOD/APPROACH

The evaluation design involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to describe and evaluate the operation of the MHC and to assess its impact on clients. There was a pre-post-intervention comparison. The principal components were: 1) secondary analysis of mental health service and jail data containing information on MHC clients; 2) participant observation of the Mental Health Court process; 3) MHC consumer interviews; 4) stakeholder interviews; and 5) monthly review of the MHC assessment, jail triage and enrollment process.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Recidivism, client satisfaction, stakeholder perceptions, and court processes.
FINDINGS:

- The MHC demonstrated success in both reducing the number of MHC clients who re-offended, the number of crimes committed and number of probation violations post-enrollment in MHC compared to pre-MHC. Most MIRAP clients 71% (85 individuals) had no criminal justice contact in the six months post-enrollment in MHC.

- The overall crime rate of mental health court participants was reduced by almost 75% six months after enrollment in MHC as compared to the six months prior to MHC.

- There was a 56% reduction in probation violations following entry into the MHC.

- Twenty-two percent (22%) of program participants had four or more arrests in the six months prior to enrollment in MHC. After enrollment in MHC, only 5% of program participants were arrested four or more times.

- Clients reported positive experiences with MHC. They felt the support from court personnel and mental health providers was critical in successfully completing the program requirements. They reported that the services helped them get off the streets and to stop committing crime. Clients also reported an increased quality of life, an improved self-esteem, an increased ability to manage their mental illness, and less involvement with the legal system.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

The Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC) began operations in March 2002 as a demonstration project in the Kings County Supreme Court in Brooklyn, New York. The Court’s ultimate goal is to reduce recidivism and stop the “revolving door” of the mentally ill in and out of the criminal justice system. This is done by addressing the treatment needs of the individual with mental illness and the public safety concerns of the community by linking defendants to treatment as an alternative to incarceration. First-time felony offenders are mandated to 12-18 months in treatment, felony offenders who have a previous felony conviction to 18-24 months, and misdemeanor offenders to 12 months. Eligible defendants plead guilty at the outset of participation and are monitored regularly by the BMHC judge and dedicated clinical team while under court mandate. Upon graduation, all charges are dismissed for misdemeanor and first-time non-violent felony offenders. Charges for violent first-time felony offenders (who are admitted on a case-by-case basis) and felony offenders with a prior felony conviction are reduced to a misdemeanor. In addition, graduating violent offenders receive probation. Participants who are unsuccessful are terminated and sentenced to jail or prison.

**METHOD/APPROACH**
Pre/post- intervention comparisons.

**OUTCOME MEASURES**
Client satisfaction, recidivism, homelessness, substance abuse, psychiatric hospitalizations, and psychosocial functioning.
FINDINGS:

- Participants enrolled prior to June 2003 were asked to participate in an interview one year following enrollment in the BMHC. Overall, they perceived themselves to have a high level of independent decision-making, control, choice, and freedom. They did not feel coerced into the Court. In addition, there were high levels of satisfaction with the level of procedural justice.

- In addition to the Brooklyn Mental Health Court qualifying arrest, 27% of participants had been arrested at least once in the 12 months prior to enrollment. During the first 12 months of Brooklyn Mental Health Court participation, a total of six participants (16%) committed a new offense. While suggestive, this difference was statistically non-significant.

- A total of 16% of participants were homeless in the 12 months preceding enrollment compared to 11% during their first 12 months of enrollment. The average number of days homeless similarly declined (from 60 to 35 days), although these differences were not significant statistically.

- Participants showed dramatic decreases in drug and alcohol use.

- While there are many possible reasons for psychiatric hospitalizations, a decrease in the percentage of participants hospitalized can be viewed positively as an indicator that participants were actively engaged in treatment. There was a significant decrease—50 percent to 19 percent— in the percentage of participants hospitalized in the first 12 months in the BMHC versus the 12 months preceding enrollment.

- The Health of the Nation Outcome Scale measures a wide range of health and social domains, including psychiatric symptoms, physical health, functioning, relationships, and housing. Participants improved their functioning on nearly every scale in the 12 months following enrollment. They showed statistically significant improvement on the scales measuring problems with cognition, depressed moods, living conditions, and occupations and activities.
COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION
No information provided.

REFERENCE:
Allegheny County Mental Health Court

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown

TARGET POPULATION: Nonviolent individuals with a mental illness who have been charged with a misdemeanor or felony

The Allegheny County MHC is a collaboration among the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health, the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, the Office of the Public Defender, the Office of the District Attorney, and the Office of Probation and Parole. Participation is voluntary on the part of eligible defendants. The MHC process is initiated by referral, which may come from the jail, the District Attorney, Public Defender, a treatment provider or family member. When all of the pertinent information is gathered, a decision is made as to whether to offer the defendant the opportunity to enter the MHC program. The MHC intervention is essentially probation with close supervision and mandated treatment. The client is seen at an initial MHC proceeding and then returns to court for a reinforcement hearing every 30, 60, or 90 days. If the participant adheres to the service plan and receives positive reports at the periodic reinforcement hearings, the probation term is cut short.

METHOD/APPROACH

Two year pre/post cost analysis.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Program costs.
FINDINGS:

- The MHC program did not result in substantial incremental costs, at least in the short term, over status quo adjudication and processing for individuals with serious mental illness who would otherwise pass through the traditional court system.

- Over the longer term, the MHC program may actually result in net savings to government, to the extent that MHC participation is associated with reductions in criminal recidivism and reductions in the utilization of the most expensive types of mental health treatment (i.e., hospitalization).

- There was no evidence to suggest that diverting these seriously mentally ill individuals into the MHC program posed a higher risk to public safety.

- Both the counterfactual analysis (if the MHC did not exist) and the one-year pre/post analysis suggest a negligible impact on costs, although one shows some incremental expense associated with the MHC program and the other shows some savings.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION
See findings.

REFERENCE:
Maricopa County Mental Health Courts

PROGRAM RATING:  Unknown

TARGET POPULATION:  Mentally ill misdemeanor offenders.

Mental Health Court (MHC) is a specialized docket designed to address the unique needs of offenders with serious mental illnesses, provide services that will reduce the possibility of recidivism and to reduce the number of jail days these individuals spend in custody. By early identification of mentally ill or developmentally disabled offenders, the Court can integrate treatment services with judicial case processing. Defendants diagnosed with mental illness can choose to be placed in a specialized mental health court docket where they are referred for individualized treatment and services. In MHC, the judge, prosecutor, and public defender meet bi-weekly (or as necessary) to address the defendant’s psychological needs and make assessments for treatment referrals. Defendants participating in the MHC Program were monitored for approximately six months. Upon successful completion of the program, the defendant’s charges were dismissed.

METHOD/APPROACH

Surveys were administered to probationers (clients), probation officers, judges, and attorneys working in the MHC. They were asked to compare their experiences in MHC versus traditional court. There was also a comparison of recidivism, revocation, and reinstatement data for the two types of court.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Revocation of, successful completion of, and reinstatement to probation; perceptions of probationers, probation officers, value options staff, and judges/attorneys.
FINDINGS:

- During the three-month evaluation period in 2002 and 2003, the number of probation violations/revocations was almost identical in the MHC and traditional court.

- The percentage of probationers reinstated to probation was slightly lower in Mental Health Court.

- Percentage of probationers who were early terminated or successfully expired from probation was significantly higher in 2003 after the inception of MHC.

- Probationers, probation officers, value options staff, and judges/attorneys all believed that MHC kept probationers out of jail; however, the data did not support this proposition.

- Respondents were generally positive about the treatment benefits of MHC and its superiority over traditional court in meeting clients’ mental health needs.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION
Vague and impressionistic information was provided.

REFERENCE:
Seattle Municipal Court Mental Health Court

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown

TARGET POPULATION: Misdemeanants with serious mental illnesses

The Mental Health Court (MHC) uses a team approach involving a dedicated judge, defense attorney, mental health professional, and two probation officers. These players work to link defendants to treatment, housing, and other support systems and monitor defendants to ensure adherence to treatment conditions. The MHC uses a range of sanctions and incentives tailored to each defendant’s needs, abilities, progress, and level of risk to ensure public safety and treatment compliance. Defendants have every hearing in the same courtroom, in front of the same judge, with the same attorneys, and courtroom staff from the point of entry into the MHC for as long as they participate in the MHC.

METHOD/APPROACH

Pre/post intervention comparisons and comparisons with those not in the MHC; observations of court proceedings; key informant and stakeholder interviews.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Time in jail, reincarceration rates, bookings/new charges.

FINDINGS:

- The number of new bookings decreased significantly following involvement with the MHC.
- The re-incarceration rate decreased following MHC involvement.
- Time spent in jail increased slightly following MHC involvement.
- Case processing was slightly faster for MHC defendants relative to a comparison group, but the findings were not statistically significant.
- The volume of treatment received increased following MHC involvement.
• Participation in the MHC improves the likelihood of success in treatment, in accessing housing and shelter, and in receiving other critical support.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**
No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**
San Francisco Behavioral Health Court

PROGRAM RATING:       Promising
TARGET POPULATION:    Mentally disordered persons in San Francisco jail for nonviolent offenses

The Behavioral Health Court was created in 2002 in response to the increasing numbers of mentally ill defendants cycling through the jails and courts. Through a collaboration among the Superior Court, Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, Psychiatric Services, University of California’s Case Management System, and the Department of Public Health, BHC strives to connect criminal defendants who suffer from serious mental illness to treatment services in the community, to find appropriate dispositions to the criminal charges that consider the mental illness and offense seriousness, and to ensure public safety by decreasing recidivism through appropriate mental health treatment and intensive supervision. Participation in BHC is voluntary and, often, defendants do not have to enter a guilty plea to criminal charges in order to enroll. The judge and lawyers work closely with the mental health providers who provide intensive case management to the clients with a focus on the person's diagnosis and psychosocial needs rather than criminal charges. Generally, if the defendant's mental illness is a primary motivating factor in the criminal activity that brought the defendant into the criminal justice system, the case will be considered for BHC.

METHOD/APPROACH

A retrospective design was used to compare the occurrence of new criminal charges for individuals who entered a mental health court after arrest and other adults with mental disorders who were booked into county jail after arrest during the same time frame. A matching strategy based on propensity scores was used to adjust for nonrandom selection into the mental health court.

OUTCOME MEASURES
New charges, new charges for violence, program status (i.e., graduation, continuing enrollment, withdrawal from program, noncompliance).
FINDINGS:

- By the end of the follow-up period, of the 170 individuals who had enrolled in the mental health court program, 48% had graduated, 26% were still in the program, and 26% had left the court for other reasons: 11 voluntarily opted out, five were removed by the court because of arrests for new charges, 11 were removed by the court for noncompliance, and 17 left for other reasons.

- After controlling for the propensity scores, demographic variables, diagnosis, and number and type of charges during the 12-month baseline period, mental health court participation predicted a longer time to any new charge and to a new violent charge. The probability of a new charge and a new violent charge was also reduced.

- At 18 months, the likelihood of a new charge or violent charge was reduced by 26% and 55%, respectively.

- By 18 months, the risk of mental health court graduates being charged with any new offense was 34% compared with about 56% for comparable persons who received treatment as usual, and the risk of mental health court graduates being charged with a new violent crime was about half that of the treatment as usual group (6% compared with 13%).

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

Assessment

Nine evaluations of mental health courts were identified. Five of the programs were rated here as “Promising” and four as “Unknown”. Three of the programs with Promising ratings had qualified ratings due to weaker research designs.

The mental health courts appeared to contribute to a reduction in criminal recidivism in all seven of the jurisdictions in which the evaluation addressed this issue, although in one case (Brooklyn) the reduction was not statistically significant. Studies were mixed in terms of whether the time to a new arrest was increased by involvement in MHC. The evaluations in Broward and King counties showed reductions in violent offenses. It was also not clear whether MHCs reduced the time clients spent in jail, as the results differed in Broward County, Maricopa County, and Seattle. With regard to probation outcomes, Clark County showed sharp reductions in violations, while the evaluation in Maricopa County showed no reduction in violations/revocations. However, the Maricopa County study did show that there was an increase in the successful completion and early termination of probation associated with involvement in MHC.

A number of studies showed that MHC contributed to improved psychosocial functioning, including an improved quality of life, a reduction in substance abuse, and improved psychological functioning. For example, in Brooklyn, there was a significant decrease in psychiatric hospitalizations and in nearly every area tapped by the Health of the Nation Outcome Scale. This Scale measures a wide range of health and social domains, including psychiatric symptoms, physical health, functioning, relationships, and housing. Participants in MHC showed statistically significant improvements on the scales measuring problems with cognition, depressed moods, living conditions, and occupations and activities. In Seattle, participation in the MHC improved the likelihood of success in treatment, in accessing housing and shelter, and in receiving other critical support.

Evaluations probing client satisfaction with MHCs generally found high levels of satisfaction. For example, in Clark County, clients felt that the support from court personnel and mental health providers was critical in successfully completing the program requirements. They reported that the services helped them get off the streets and to stop committing crime. Clients also reported an improved quality of life, better self-esteem; an increased ability to manage their mental illness, and less involvement with the legal system. In Brooklyn, clients of the
MHC perceived themselves to have a high level of independent decision-making, control, choice, and freedom. They did not feel coerced into the Court. In addition, there were high levels of satisfaction with the level of procedural justice.

While MHC seemed to produce some beneficial outcomes, it was interesting that few studies directly examined the dosage of treatment and its outcome. The Santa Barbara County study found that while clients of MHC were more actively engaged in treatment than traditional court, the intensity of treatment was not found to be related to outcomes. Still, clients of several MHCs, such as the one in Maricopa, were generally positive about the treatment benefits of MHC and its superiority over traditional court in meeting clients’ mental health needs.

There was little information available regarding differences in case processing between MHCs and traditional courts. The Seattle evaluation did examine this issue and found that processing times were slightly less than for traditional courts but this finding was not statistically significant.

The evaluations also paid little attention to the costs of operating a MHC. One of the studies (Allegheny County) focused on this question. Based on two analyses, this study showed no overall cost savings or additional costs. The authors did speculate that, in the long run, it is possible that eventually the lower crime rate and lower hospitalization rate resulting from these courts would reduce costs to society.
5.6 Narcotics Overdose Prevention and Education (NOPE)

This program is a collaborative effort that is designed to reduce experimentation and substance abuse among the teen population, as well as to raise awareness and knowledge regarding the harms associated with substance abuse and addiction. Community partners include some of the following agencies and groups: Palm Beach County’s Sheriff’s Office, municipal law enforcement agencies, the Department of Juvenile Justice, Florida Office of Drug Control, Safe and Drug Free School Advisory Board, addiction and prevention specialists, treatment providers, private corporations, and parents who have lost children in some form of drug-related death.
Overdose Prevention and Response Training Program (Los Angeles)

PROGRAM RATING: Promising
TARGET POPULATION: Injection drug users

This study was an evaluation of an overdose prevention and response training program for injection drug users (IDUs) run by a community-based organization in Los Angeles. In a one-hour training session, participants learned skills to prevent, recognize, and respond to opioid overdoses. This included the placement of a call to emergency services, performing rescue breathing, and administering an intramuscular injection of naloxone (an opioid antagonist).

METHOD/APPROACH

Between September 2006 and January 2008, 93 IDUs were trained. Of those, 66 (71%) enrolled in the evaluation study and 47 participants (71%) completed an interview at baseline and at 3-month follow-up. There were pre/post intervention comparisons in the proportion of cases in which a participant responded appropriately.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Appropriate response to overdoses; knowledge about overdose risk, symptoms, and response; drug use.

FINDINGS:

- Significant increases in knowledge were found about overdose, in particular about the use of naloxone.

- At three-month follow up, the likelihood that participants would train someone else in overdose response decreased significantly.
• Twenty-two participants responded to 35 overdoses during the follow-up period. Twenty-six overdose victims recovered, four died, and the outcome of five cases was unknown. Response techniques included: staying with the victim (85%), administering naloxone (80%), providing rescue breathing (66%), and calling emergency services (60%). The average number of appropriate response techniques used by participants increased significantly from baseline to follow-up.

• More than half (53%) of program participants reported decreased drug use at follow-up.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**

Heroin Overdose Prevention and Education Campaign (Victoria, Australia)

PROGRAM RATING:        Ineffective
TARGET POPULATION:   Injecting drug users

Following the observation of an upward trend in the number of fatal heroin overdoses in Victoria, Australia, between 2001 and 2003, Victoria’s Department of Human Services organized a campaign aimed at increasing injecting drug users’ (IDUs) awareness of overdose risks and prevention strategies. Stickers, wallet cards, and posters featuring several key messages were distributed via needle and syringe programs and other drug and alcohol services between November 2005 and April 2006. The campaign focused on a variety of risk factors (e.g., using alone, mixing heroin with other drugs, unknown purity) and prevention strategies (e.g., using with others, reducing the dosage, and not mixing heroin with other drugs).

METHOD/APPROACH

The evaluation consisted of analyses of three independent data sets: 1) Quantitative data were collected from IDUs during the campaign period, both at baseline (before messages were distributed) and at follow up (post-campaign); 2) Qualitative interviews were conducted with IDUs who were Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) clients during the campaign period; and 3) Qualitative interviews were conducted with NSP staff and other key stakeholders.

OUTCOME MEASURES
Recall of campaign messages by IDUs.
**FINDINGS:**

- Just three campaign messages out of fourteen were recalled and mentioned significantly more frequently by the IDUs following the campaign than at baseline.

- The Key Informants’ (those working with the IDUs) primary concern was with the rollout of campaign materials, which resulted in resources being developed when heroin purity was increasing, but which became available when the quality of heroin was low, thus making the messages less relevant.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**

Prevention Point Pittsburgh Overdose Prevention Project

PROGRAM RATING: Promising, with qualification

TARGET POPULATION: Individuals at risk of drug overdose, those working with such people, as well as family and friends

The Overdose Prevention Project (ODP) is a project of Prevention Point Pittsburgh, the needle exchange program for Allegheny County. Prevention Point has been in existence since 1995, providing sterile syringes to injection drug users to prevent the spread of blood-borne disease such as HIV and Hepatitis C, as well as providing other services to reduce-drug related harm. The Overdose Prevention Project was started in 2002 in response to a dramatic increase in overdose deaths in Allegheny County. The ODP provides training on Overdose Prevention & Response to individuals at risk of drug overdose, as well as to staff of agencies working with individuals at risk, family and friends, who might be present at the scene of an overdose and in a position to save someone's life.

METHOD/APPROACH

This is a self-assessment by Prevention Point Pittsburgh with input from Dr. Eric Hulsey of the University of Pittsburgh. A pre/post-test evaluation was conducted.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Increase in knowledge about drug overdoses; successful overdose reversals.

FINDINGS:

- As of May 2008, more than 6,500 individuals had participated in the Overdose Prevention & Response training, including about 4,700 inmates in the County Jail.

- The pre/post Test Evaluation indicates a 250% increase in knowledge as a result of the training.
• Between July 2005 - October 1, 2008, 400 individuals received naloxone, through this program. As of May 2008, there were 220 successful overdose reversals using naloxone obtained through Prevention Point Pittsburgh.

• There was no increase in drug use as a result of having naloxone. With 220 reversals among 400 individuals given naloxone, Pittsburgh had a 50% ratio of reports of naloxone use.

• In 72% of the cases where 911 was not called, the reason given was fear of police involvement. People also reported concern about stigma associated with drug use.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**

San Francisco Pilot Intervention Study

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown

TARGET POPULATION: Drug injection partners

This pilot study was undertaken to investigate the safety and feasibility of training injection drug using partners to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and to administer naloxone in the event of heroin overdose. During May and June 2001, 12 pairs of injection partners were recruited from various street settings in San Francisco. Participants took part in an eight-hour training session covering heroin overdose prevention, CPR, and the use of naloxone.

METHOD/APPROACH

Following the intervention, participants were monitored (interviewed monthly) for 6 months to determine the number and outcomes of witnessed heroin overdoses, outcomes of participant interventions, and changes in the knowledge of participants of drug overdoses and drug use behavior. To further verify the overdose event, when possible, records were obtained from San Francisco’s Emergency Medical Services, hospital emergency departments, and the medical examiner.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Heroin overdoses; outcomes of participant interventions; knowledge of drug overdoses.

FINDINGS:

• Study participants witnessed 20 heroin overdose events during 6 months follow-up and they intervened in all of these events. They performed CPR in 16 (80%) events, administered naloxone in 15 (75%), and did one or the other in 19 (95%). All overdose victims survived.

• Knowledge about heroin overdose management increased, whereas that relating to heroin use decreased.
• Reasons cited for not summoning emergency services were fear of police involvement and possible arrest in 10 (50%) cases, no nearby phone in five (25%), and a perceived lack of need in five (25%).

• The number of heroin overdoses experienced by participants was similar in the 6 months before and after the intervention.

• Fourteen study participants entered drug treatment during the 6 months of follow up.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION
No information provided.

REFERENCE:
Overdose Prevention and Reversal Program (NYC)

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown
TARGET POPULATION: Opiate users

The Overdose Prevention and Reversal Program at the Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center (LESHRC) initiated a program to distribute naloxone to opiate users. Participants in the program receive a prescription for two doses of naloxone, with refills as needed, and comprehensive training to reduce overdose risk, administer naloxone, perform rescue breathing, and call 911.

METHOD/APPROACH

Two focus groups were conducted in December 2004 with 13 opiate users at LESHRC to examine knowledge about overdose and overdose prevention. The focus groups assessed participants' experiences with overdose response (specifically naloxone), understanding and perceptions of naloxone, comfort level with naloxone administration, and provided feedback about increasing the visibility and desirability of the naloxone distribution program.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Qualitative study that examined knowledge about, experiences, and attitudes toward overdose prevention and response.

FINDINGS:

- As of September 2005, 204 participants had received naloxone and been trained, and 40 had revived an overdosing friend or family member.

- Study participants unanimously recognized the potential role of naloxone in successfully reviving someone from an unconscious state produced by an overdose.

- Participants reported challenges and fears when they reflected upon their experiences of naloxone being administered to them or their administration of it to others.
• Opiate withdrawal, characterized by shaking, headache, nausea, and vomiting, was a prominent theme among study participants. Naloxone, particularly in larger doses, can incite withdrawal symptoms in opiate users. Focus group participants described the effect as "the worst feeling in the world."

• The focus groups also raised the fear of police involvement at the scene of an overdose after naloxone administration. These fears were less about individuals having drugs on them when police arrived and more about liability if they used their naloxone on a third party.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**
No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**
Assessment

Some of the overdose prevention and reversal programs have achieved impressive participation levels. For example, as of May 2008, more than 6,500 individuals had participated in the training component of the Prevention Point Pittsburgh program. However, of the five studies reviewed, two of the programs were rated here as “Promising”, two as “Unknown”, and one as “Ineffective”. There were considerable fears of the drug Naloxone and of notifying the authorities when an overdose occurred (see below).

The evaluations indicated that the training associated with the program increased the knowledge of participants significantly on the subject of drug overdoses. A six-site study by Green and her associates (2008) found that trained participants recognized more opioid overdose scenarios accurately and instances where naloxone was indicated than did untrained participants. Publicity campaigns may be another matter, as one evaluated in Victoria, Australia found that out of fourteen messages communicated, just three were recalled following the campaign.

All four studies (Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and New York) that examined the impact of a prevention program on the response to overdoses found that these programs had a major impact in saving lives and in producing overdose reversals through the administration of naloxone. In Los Angeles, the average number of appropriate response techniques used by participants increased significantly from baseline to follow-up. In Pittsburgh, as of October 1, 2008, 400 individuals received naloxone and there were 220 successful overdose reversals. In San Francisco, study participants witnessed 20 heroin overdose events during the six-month follow-up period and they intervened in all of these events. They performed CPR in 16 (80%) events, administered naloxone in 15 (75%), and did one or the other in 19 (95%). All overdose victims survived.

The failure to report overdoses to emergency services was a significant issue. A high proportion of participants in overdose prevention programs who did not report an overdose cited the fear of police involvement as a reason for not doing so. Apart from a fear of facing criminal prosecution, individuals mentioned the stigma associated with drug use and the fear of liability when they administered naloxone to another individual.

Focus groups conducted in New York City revealed that many program participants reported challenges and fears when they reflected upon their experiences of naloxone being administered to them or their administration of it to others. The drug can produce severe symptoms associated
with opiate withdrawal. One focus group participant described the effect as "the worst feeling in the world."

The impact of overdose programs on drug use varied by program. In Los Angeles, more than half (53%) of program participants reported decreased drug use at follow-up, while in Pittsburgh drug use was similar following the program. San Francisco participants experienced a similar number of heroin overdoses before and after the intervention. At the same time, a number of San Francisco participants entered drug treatment during the six-month follow up period.
5.7 Reentry Programs

Reentry programs are designed to facilitate the re-integration into society of those who are released from prison. Offender re-integration will hopefully reduce the offender’s likelihood of recidivism. In Florida, the reinstatement of the ex-prisoner’s civil rights is an important part of such re-integration efforts. However, it should be noted that on March 9, 2011, Florida’s Governor and his administration rescinded the automatic restoration of the civil rights of nonviolent offenders who have completed serving their sentences. Re-integration efforts include assisting clients with access to social services, preparing them for employment, and helping them find meaningful work.

Palm Beach County offers re-entry programs in Belle Glade and within the Public Defender’s Office. The role of the latter is to coordinate work between existing reentry programs and sites, undertake new efforts on the basis of an assessment of gaps and a strategic plan, and to manage efforts between sites in order to facilitate successful reentry services. An important task is to provide Florida Identification cards to newly released inmates to enable banking, access to social services, medical treatment, and employment.
Center for Employment Opportunities (New York)

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown
TARGET POPULATION: Ex-Prisoners referred by a parole officer

This report presented early results from an evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) in New York City, an employment program for former prisoners. Ex-prisoners face major obstacles to successful reentry and recidivism rates are high. Finding steady work is one of the central challenges they face. CEO uses a distinctive transitional employment model. Participants begin the program with a four-day Life Skills class focusing on job readiness issues, such as workplace behavior, job search skills, and decision-making. They are then placed in transitional jobs at one of 30 to 40 worksites around the city. The worksites are public agencies that have secured CEO’s services through the New York State Division of Parole to perform work for their agencies. Participants work four days per week and they are paid at the end of each day. CEO uses the transitional period to identify issues that are likely to hinder the participant’s performance in an unsubsidized, permanent job and staff work with participants to address these issues. Participants spend the fifth day of each week meeting with job coaches to discuss work performance and to prepare for interviewing, as well as meeting with job developers to discuss permanent employment opportunities. This evaluation targeted a key subset of CEO’s client population — ex-prisoners who were referred to the program by a parole officer.

METHOD/APPROACH
The evaluation adopted a design with random assignment. In 2004 and 2005, nearly 1,000 people were assigned, at random, to one of two conditions: 1) the regular CEO program or 2) to a control group in which they received basic job search assistance. The evaluation team is following both groups for several years, using surveys and administrative data to measure the program’s impact on employment, recidivism, and other outcomes. Data for the outcome evaluation are currently available for one year.

OUTCOME MEASURES
Employment and recidivism.
**FINDINGS:**

- For the full research sample, CEO generated a large, but short-lived increase in employment.

- However, by the end of the first year, the treatment and control groups were equally likely to be employed. There were also small but statistically significant decreases in two key measures of recidivism — felony convictions and incarceration for new crimes — during Year 1, but no effects on other measures.

- Most CEO participants enroll just after release from incarceration. However, a large fraction of the study sample came to CEO many months after release. Because the program was designed to serve recently released ex-prisoners, results were examined separately for those who came to CEO within three months after release (about 40 percent of the sample) and those who came later. These results are less certain because the sample sizes are relatively small, but they show a potentially important pattern: Among those who came to CEO within three months after release, program group members were significantly less likely to have their parole revoked, to be convicted of a felony, and to be re-incarcerated.

- There were no significant effects on any recidivism measures for those who came to CEO more than three months after release.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**

Boston Reentry Initiative

PROGRAM RATING: Promising
TARGET POPULATION: Violent offenders

The Boston Reentry Initiative (BRI) is an interagency initiative to assist violent adult offenders who have been released from the local jail to make the transition back to their Boston neighborhoods. The initiative develops individual plans to reintegrate them into society during their incarceration and this work is continued in the community through the focused attention of a mentor. Aside from mentorship, the program offers a combination of social service assistance (e.g., shelter, clothing, transportation) and vocational development.

METHOD/APPROACH
This study adopted a quasi-experimental design and survival analysis to evaluate the impact of the BRI on the recidivism of program participants relative to an equivalent control group. The control group was selected through propensity scoring methods.

OUTCOME MEASURES
Recidivism.

FINDINGS:
BRI was associated with significant reductions—on the order of 30 percent—in the overall and violent arrest failure rates. This finding is especially significant as the use of a particularly hardcore, violent treatment group may have biased the findings against a treatment effect.
COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION
No information provided.

REFERENCE:
Harlem Parole Reentry Court

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Parolees released from state prison

The Harlem Parole Reentry Court was established in June, 2001 in response to the high number of parolees returning to the Manhattan neighborhood of East Harlem. The program was created by the Center for Court Innovation in cooperation with the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services and the Division of Parole. The Reentry Court provides intensive judicial oversight, supervision, and services to new parolees during the first six months following release from state prison. The program is designed to stabilize returning parolees in the initial phase of their reintegration by helping them to find jobs, secure housing, remain drug-free, and assume responsibility for their families and themselves. Following graduation, participants were transferred to traditional parole supervision, where they could continue to receive case management services voluntarily through the Court.

METHOD/APPROACH
Using a quasi-experimental design, the evaluators compared Reentry Court participants with similar parolees placed in traditional supervision. From a pool of more than twenty thousand parolees released in Manhattan from November 2002 through February 2008, 317 Reentry Court participants were matched to 637 comparison parolees using a propensity score matching procedure. Sample parolees were then tracked over three years from their release.

OUTCOME MEASURES
Re-arrest, reconviction, and revocation of parole.

FINDINGS:

- Reentry Court parolees (including both graduates and failures) were less likely to be rearrested than the control group, although only some effects approached statistical significance (misdemeanor re-arrests over the first year and drug-related re-arrests over the first two years).
• Reentry Court parolees were less likely to be reconvicted, and the effects were significant at one, two, and three years (43 percent versus 53 percent at three years).

• Reentry Court parolees were more likely to be revoked and returned to prison. Revocations for technical violations were significantly higher at one, two, and three years and revocations for any reason were significantly higher after two and three years.

• Reentry Court parolees who completed the program experienced lower odds of re-arrest and revocation. Pre-intervention characteristics that were associated with a greater likelihood of program completion included prior parole term, marriage/cohabitation, high school diploma or GED, and prior drug treatment.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**
No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**
Kentucky Reentry Courts

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown
TARGET POPULATION: Offenders with substance abuse issues

The Kentucky Reentry Court model program combined 6-months of in-prison treatment with at least one year of treatment in an established Drug Court upon return to the community. The in-prison phase occurred in a correctional institution (usually an in-prison therapeutic environment) and the Drug Court phase of treatment occurred following reentry to the community through an established Drug Court program. It was believed that by combining two treatment approaches there would be a greater impact through a combination of residential and outpatient treatment.

METHOD/APPROACH
The method involved a simple description of the outcomes of a small number of individuals enrolled in the program before it was discontinued due to the expiration of funding. There was no control group.

OUTCOME MEASURES
Drug use, new criminal charges, and employment.

FINDINGS:
- Initial findings concerning the during-program performance were that 5 of the 6 clients were still active in treatment (1 had absconded). These individuals showed high levels of behavioral compliance with treatment expectations.
- Several clients were promoted to either phase 2 or phase 3 of the Drug Court, none had tested positive for an illicit drug on urine tests, none had received a new criminal charge, and most were employed (the majority were unemployed prior to entering Drug Court).
COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION
No information provided.

REFERENCE:
Serious Offender Accountability Restoration Project (Hennepin County, Minnesota)

PROGRAM RATING: Ineffective

TARGET POPULATION: Offenders between 16 and 34 years of age

Project SOAR was designed to be a multi-faceted intervention addressing the principal challenges associated with prisoner reentry, especially their employment, housing, and the drug-related and mental health needs. During the three years Project SOAR was in operation, a total of 240 offenders (208 adults and 32 juveniles) participated in the program. Project SOAR included three phases: Institutional, Reentry Preparation (strength-based case planning and restorative community circles); and Community-Based Services (intensive housing assistance, community resource development, and service coordination). The aim of Project SOAR was to assist offenders in becoming productive and law-abiding citizens, through: 1) acquisition and retention of long-term employment; 2) residential stability; 3) successfully addressing substance abuse issues and mental health needs; and 4) establishment of a supportive role in the community.

METHOD/APPROACH
Random assignment of offenders into experimental and control groups.

OUTCOME MEASURES
Recidivism as measured by reconviction and re-incarceration.

FINDINGS:

- Despite the random assignment of offenders into experimental and control groups, SOAR participants had significantly longer criminal histories than offenders in the control group.

- SOAR participants had higher recidivism rates than the control group: 1) 26 percent were reconvicted of a felony compared to 20 percent in the control group; 18 percent were re-incarcerated for a new crime compared to 13 percent in the control group. However, the difference in recidivism rates between the SOAR and control groups was not statistically significant.
• Major components of the program were not implemented.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

No information provided.

**REFERENCE:**

Maryland Reentry Partnership Initiative

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown

TARGET POPULATION: Prisoners released from the Maryland Transition Center

Established in 1999, the Maryland Reentry Partnership Initiative (REP) is a coalition of agencies that provide prisoners returning to Baltimore with comprehensive reentry services, including housing assistance, substance abuse treatment, psychological counseling, education, and vocational training. The program was also designed to provide pre-release preparation. The stated goals of the program are: 1) Enhancing public safety by reducing recidivism; 2) Increasing offender accountability and community reparation; and 3) Increasing community and correctional capacity to assess offender needs and to match needs with resources. REP was designed as a community-justice partnership in which public agencies and community based organizations function in concert to provide continuous case management as prisoners transition into the community. The REP model addresses prisoner reentry needs at the individual, community, and systems levels. At the individual level, returning prisoners are matched to social and medical services designed to help them reintegrate into the community. Community-based organizations seek to strengthen returning prisoners’ support networks, enhance informal social controls within the target neighborhoods, improve community service availability, and increase offender accountability. At the systems level, REP brings together corrections and community agencies to coordinate services, share information, and ensure continuous case management of the offender.

METHOD/APPROACH
The evaluation compared 229 REP clients to a contemporaneous cohort of 370 prisoners released from the Maryland Transition Center to neighborhoods in Baltimore City that were not in the REP catchment area. The quasi-experimental design assessed whether REP reduced the prevalence and incidence of criminal justice contact during the post-release period (38 months on average).
OUTCOME MEASURES
Time to re-arrest or a new conviction; likelihood and number of new convictions.

FINDINGS

• Slightly fewer REP clients (72% compared to 77.6%) committed at least one new crime in the study period than the comparison group. Overall REP participants committed 68 fewer crimes during the study period than ex-prisoners in the comparison group.

• There were no significant differences in time to re-arrest, likelihood of a new conviction, number of new convictions, or time to a new conviction.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION
The REP program was found to be cost-beneficial, returning about $3 in benefits for every dollar in new costs. The total net benefit to the citizens of Baltimore was calculated to be about $7.2 million, or about $21,500 per REP participant. Much of the benefit was found to be due to a reduction in the incidence of serious crimes, as there were 11 attempted murder charges and two murder charges among the comparison group and no murder or attempted murder charges among the treatment group.

REFERENCE:
Assessment

The reentry programs reviewed were either comprehensive, multiagency efforts or focused on one challenge faced by offenders returning to the community, such as employment or a substance abuse problem. The findings were not encouraging as just two of the six programs (Boston and Harlem) were rated here as “Promising”. The remainder of the programs were rated as of “Unknown” effectiveness or as “Ineffective”. The CEO program in New York revealed that gains produced in recidivism may be more pronounced where the offender enters the program within three months of release. The evaluation of the SOAR program in Hennepin County also alerted us to the fact that groups that are being compared may be dissimilar, even where random assignment, the “Gold Standard” in evaluation designs, occurs. In that study, the treatment group as a whole was found to have longer criminal histories than the control group.

A systematic review of eight employment programs for convicted or incarcerated offenders who are living in the community also is not very encouraging (Visher et al., 2005). The authors conducted a quantitative meta-analysis of eight random assignment studies of such programs, using the Campbell Collaboration methodology. The results indicated that this group of community employment programs for ex-offenders did not reduce recidivism.
5.8 Alternatives to Incarceration

Alternatives to incarceration are designed to provide the least intrusive conditions to those who pose no serious danger to society. These sentences also acknowledge the potentially adverse effects of incarceration, especially for juveniles. Palm Beach County offers two programs in this area. Home detention monitoring services are provided and designed to address the individual needs of youth, some of whom were eligible for secure detention, while avoiding the restrictive aspects of such detention. Monitoring includes face-to-face contact as well as indirect surveillance on a random basis, 24 hours a day. The programs also offer education, training, psychological counseling, and community support. The goals of the Youth Alternative Care program are to increase the rate of diversion from secure juvenile detention and to reduce recidivism for this population.
Redeploy Illinois (Macon County, Illinois)

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown
TARGET POPULATION: Nonviolent juvenile offenders

Redeploy Illinois provides opportunities in education, recreation, community service, crisis and health intervention, and alternative forms of detention for non-violent youth who would otherwise be committed to the Illinois Department of Corrections. The program was set up to offer individualized services to juvenile participants based on their specific risk factors and needs. Its three main goals are: 1) repairing harm to victims by making offenders accountable for their actions; 2) preventing repeat delinquent behavior by developing offenders’ pro-social skill competencies; and 3) ensuring public safety. Participants who successfully completed individualized treatment were discharged from the program. Services included: cognitive education (such as anger management and life skills); alternatives to detention (home detention, electronic monitoring); community restorative boards; community service; crisis intervention; home intervention; mental health treatment; recreation; relationship building; and vocational education.

METHOD/APPROACH

A descriptive methodology was adopted involving a variety of data sources: surveys, interviews, site visits, and focus groups with juvenile justice system personnel and service providers.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Reductions in commitments to correctional facilities and probation utilization rates. The program’s impact on participants, families, and victims was also noted.
FINDINGS:

- From 2001-2003, Macon County’s juvenile commitment to correctional facilities averaged 53 youth. For the program period, the projected number of juveniles committed was 34, representing a 36 percent commitment reduction.

- The overall short-term impact of the pilot program on juvenile participants was positive based on interviews with representatives from the juvenile justice system, the advisory board, victims, and family members of juvenile offenders.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

The projected cost of the program per juvenile was estimated at $16,238. In 2005, courts admitted 1,563 youth to the Department of Corrections at a per capita annual cost of $70,827.

REFERENCE:

Detention Diversion Advocacy Program
(Philadelphia, PA)

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown
TARGET POPULATION: High risk juvenile offenders

The principal goals of the Detention Diversion Advocacy Program (DDAP) are to ensure that juveniles attend their scheduled court hearings and to reduce the likelihood that they will reoffend while awaiting case disposition. Other goals include reducing the disproportionate confinement of minority youth, offering coordinated interventions, demonstrating that community-based services are an effective alternative to secure custody, providing quality treatment-oriented services with dignity to all program participants and their families, and reducing the unnecessary use of secure detention. In order to achieve these goals, the DDAP program uses intensive case management techniques, which includes an individualized service plan for each participant. These plans address the youth’s needs and the key issues of residence, education, employment, counseling, drug treatment, transportation, mental health services, mentoring, and other factors critical to adjustment in the community. Monitoring of the youth is initiated immediately upon release and includes a minimum of three face-to-face contacts daily during the first week. The frequency of monitoring can be reduced over time at the discretion of the case manager.

METHOD/APPROACH

The intention was to compare DDAP youth with a randomly selected group of youth who did not participate in the program and remained in secure custody. In reality, only a description of outcomes for the treatment group was offered.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Court appearances, re-arrest.
FINDINGS:

- Just four percent of DDAP youth missed court appearances.
- Just over 6 percent of the DDAP youth were rearrested during the program’s tenure, although a bench warrant was requested in the case of 13.4% of the sample.
- Many of the participants reported that they respected the program because the case managers took them seriously and cared about them. They felt the case managers respected them and treated their families with dignity.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information was provided.

REFERENCE:

Redirection Program (State of Florida)

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Non-law violators (e.g., curfew violators), misdemeanor offenders, or nonviolent youth

The Redirection Program is a community-based, family-centered alternative to residential juvenile justice commitment programs. Three treatment models used are Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy programs, and Brief Strategic Family Therapy. These treatments are all provided in the home. All three therapy models aim to help parents implement more effective ways to communicate with, monitor, and discipline their adolescent children.

METHOD/APPROACH

Program youth were compared to a comparison group that included youth who had criminal histories similar to Redirection youth and were committed to low-, moderate-, and high-risk programs for offenses that would have made them eligible for Redirection. The authors used survival analysis to statistically control for remaining differences between Redirection and comparison group youth on factors correlated with recidivism.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Arrest, conviction, commitment to a secure juvenile facility, or incarceration.

FINDINGS:

- The probability of any arrest for a misdemeanor or a felony was 9% lower for youth completing the Redirection Program than for comparable youth released from residential commitment, a statistically significant difference. Moreover, the probability of a criminal arrest was 31% less for Redirection youth assessed as high risk to reoffend than for high-risk youth released from residential commitment.
• The probability of an arrest for a felony was 14% lower for youth completing the Redirection Program than comparable youth released from residential commitment and the probability of a violent felony was 15% lower for Redirection youth.

• Youth completing Redirection were 14% less likely to be convicted for a felony after treatment than similar youth released from residential commitment.

• The probability that a Redirection youth would be committed at some point during the follow-up period was no different from the probability that the comparison group youth would be recommitted.

• The likelihood of a youth who completed Redirection subsequently receiving a prison sentence was 35% less than that for the comparison group, controlling for age, prior referrals, and other factors related to recidivism.

**COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION**

The program is said to have achieved $51.2 million in cost savings over 5 years.

**REFERENCE:**

Detention Diversion Advocacy Project  
(San Francisco, CA)

PROGRAM RATING: Promising
TARGET POPULATION: Youth at high risk of subsequent delinquency

The idea behind the Detention Diversion Advocacy Project (DDAP) approach is advocacy by non-legal experts acting on behalf of youthful offenders at disposition hearings. Disposition case advocacy, in turn, is rooted in the concept of case management, which is a client-level strategy promoting the coordination of human services. Case management integrates services across a cluster of organizations, to ensure continuity of care and to facilitate development of client skills (e.g., job interviewing and literacy skills) by involving a variety of social networks and service providers. Once a potential client is identified, DDAP case managers present a release plan to the judge that includes a list of appropriate community services that will be accessed on behalf of the youth. Emphasis is placed on allowing the youth to live at home while going through the program, if this is possible. If the judge deems the release plan acceptable, the youth is released to DDAP supervision. The program provides consistent support and supervision to youth and their families. DDAP requires the case manager to have daily contact with the youth, his or her family, and significant others, including a minimum of three in-person meetings a week with the youth. Parents and guardians are provided with additional services (e.g., employment services, daycare, drug treatment, and income support).

METHOD/APPROACH

DDAP youth were compared to a group of youth remaining within the juvenile justice system.

OUTCOME MEASURES

General recidivism, charges for violence, referrals to juvenile court.
FINDINGS:

- The DDAP group was considered to be at higher risk than the comparison group.

- The overall recidivism rate of the DDAP group was 34 percent, compared with 60 percent for the comparison group.

- A total of 14 percent of the DDAP group had two or more subsequent referrals, compared with 50 percent of the comparison group.

- Just 9 percent of the DDAP group returned to court on a violent crime charge, compared with 25 percent of the comparison group.

- Just 5 percent of the DDAP group had two or more subsequent petitions, compared with 22 percent of the comparison group.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

The VisionQuest Program

PROGRAM RATING: Promising

TARGET POPULATION: Chronic delinquents who had failed in other placements

The VisionQuest program emphasized outdoor wilderness experiences and athletic challenges, such as extended cycling trips. All of the programs stressed physical conditioning, accountability for behavior, and overcoming personal and physical challenges. Staff stayed with program participants on a 24-hour basis. The program was deemed to be controversial due to allegations that participants were occasionally treated roughly by staff. The families are integrated into the programming, as they are encouraged to visit the program sites and family treatment sessions are organized.

METHOD/APPROACH

Recidivism rates of VisionQuest graduates were compared with similar San Diego delinquents placed in other correctional programs.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Re-arrest rates.

FINDINGS:

- One year after release from the program, 55 percent of the VisionQuest group had been rearrested. This figure compared favorably with three other groups that had re-arrest rates of 71 percent, 68 percent, and 88 percent.

- Controlling for differences in prior records, the authors estimated that the program reduced the one-year recidivism rate by 32 percent.
COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

While no information was provided on the cost of the program, the authors argue that if such programs produce appreciable reductions in recidivism, the long-term financial benefit to the state will justify the costs of even such intensive programs.

REFERENCE:

Assessment

Given the popularity of programs to divert young offenders from the justice system and from correctional facilities, the small number of outcome evaluations was quite surprising. Three of the five evaluations identified were rated as “Promising” (Redirection Florida, Detention Diversion Advocacy Project in San Francisco, and VisionQuest) and the remaining two (Redploy Illinois and DDAP in Philadelphia) were rated as “Unknown” due to weak research designs and/or a lack of sufficient data as to their impact on crime.

All three programs rated as Promising appeared to lower recidivism rates relative to a control group that received conventional programming. Redirection Florida also reduced commitment levels to secure juvenile facilities and DDAP in San Francisco lowered the number of referrals to juvenile court. In addition, Redirection Florida was found to produce substantial cost savings.

While the evidence overall was mixed, all five diversion programs showed changes in a positive direction. The two rated as Unknown simply lacked methodologies with sufficient rigor to qualify for a higher rating. Given the present fiscal environment and growing support for dealing with delinquent youth in the community and home rather than custodial settings, the need is clear for more independent outcome evaluations that would support this decarceration trend.
5.9 Strategically Targeting Online Predators

This initiative involves a partnership between the Palm Beach County Sheriff’s Office, the State Attorney’s Office, and a privately-owned data mining company. The aim is to investigate online sexual exploitation cases by using innovative forensic software technology to identify high volume users and traders of child sexual abuse images. The ultimate objectives are to arrest and prosecute these users and to rescue children who have been victimized. This program exists due to the recognition that online demand and dissemination of images depicting children involved in sexual acts encourages the abuse of children.
One in five youth are solicited each year for sex via the Internet (Finkelhor, et al., 2000). This evaluation study examined the extent and effectiveness of proactive police investigations in which investigators posed as minors in order to catch potential sex offenders on the Internet. For example, investigators typically met their targets through sex-oriented chat rooms on the Internet. These are referred to as proactive investigations in contrast to those investigations in which youth or their parents report the attempted solicitation of a minor by an adult. The study utilized a subsample of cases from the National Juvenile Online Victimization Survey (N-JOV). These cases involved persons arrested for Internet sex crimes against minors in the year beginning July 1, 2000. This was the first national research project to systematically collect data about the number and nature of arrests for online sex crimes against minors.

METHOD/APPROACH

The N-JOV study collected information from a national sample of law enforcement agencies about the characteristics of Internet sex crimes against minors during a one-year period. A national sample of 2,574 state, county, and local law enforcement agencies was surveyed by mail asking them if they had made any arrests in Internet child pornography or sexual exploitation cases in the year beginning July 1, 2000. Detailed interviews were conducted with investigators involved with such cases. Interviews were conducted on all eligible cases, where an agency investigated three or fewer cases and on a random sample of cases where the agency dealt with more than three cases. There were 612 completed interviews. In close to half of the cases handled at the state, county, or local levels, interviews of the prosecutors were also conducted.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Number of arrests; convictions achieved; problematic investigations.
FINDINGS:

- An estimated 644 arrests were made in the United States during the one-year study period in proactive investigations of sexual exploitation via the Internet. This represents 25% of all arrests for Internet sex crimes against minors.

- While there are concerns about the ability to successfully prosecute individuals through proactive investigations in which a minor has not been victimized, 91% of those charged pled guilty and there were low levels of dropped or dismissed cases. Cases that went to trial usually resulted in conviction.

- In addition to the incarceration of two-thirds of offenders, sentences also often included probation, fines, registry as a sex offender, restrictions on Internet use or access to child pornography, and conditions requiring psychological counseling and treatment for substance abuse.

- In 23 percent of the cases, there were aspects of the police investigation that were problematic to the prosecution’s case.

- These investigations tend to take less time than those involving actual juvenile victims.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No figures provided but the authors note that these proactive investigations require considerable agency resources and training of officers posing as minors.

REFERENCE:

Assessment

Just one evaluation study of proactive police investigations against online sex offenders who target minors was identified and the initiative was rated as “Promising”. However, this was a national study that examined a significant sample of such cases occurring in a one-year period in the United States. The study found that these investigations yielded a high conviction rate among those charged for sexually exploiting minors or for child pornography offenses committed over the Internet. Two-thirds of those convicted received custodial sentences and many also received terms of probation, fines, were registered as a sex offender, were restricted in their Internet use or access to child pornography, and were conditions requiring psychological counseling and treatment for substance abuse.

While carrying considerable promise as a deterrent and as a way of investigating sexual predation on the Internet, proactive law enforcement investigations in this area are costly. The authors of the National Juvenile Online Victimization Study noted, for example, that considerable training of staff is required in playing the role of minors in proactive investigations.

In approximately one of four cases examined in the N-JOV study, there were aspects of the proactive investigation that were problematic in the prosecution of the case. Urbas (2010) points out that police have to conduct themselves within a regulatory framework that may limit the extent to which pretending to be a child produces results, particularly if it results in evidence being inadmissible in subsequent criminal proceedings. In some jurisdictions, there may simply be no infraction committed unless an actual child is communicated with, so that obtaining evidence of communications with an undercover officer is of little or no evidentiary value. In some legal systems, a defense of entrapment can be raised by a defendant, especially where it appears that the defendant was cajoled or coerced into a course of action which he may not have otherwise committed. Thus, Urbas notes that great care must be taken in the way online contact with suspected sexual predators is conducted, so as to avoid interfering with legitimate communication between citizens, even where they are children and young adults.

Legal constraints and other limitations of proactive investigations underscore the importance of other means of protecting children from online predators. Dombrowski and his colleagues (2004) point out that although there are technological avenues for the protection of children, technically savvy predators may be able to circumvent these measures. Consequently, educating youth and those responsible for their well-being, as well as monitoring Internet use, are the best means of protection from online solicitation. The authors add that caregivers should become familiar with their children’s online friends and, for children under age 16, a caregiver should supervise offline meetings. For those over 16, the adolescent should be instructed, at a
minimum, to bring a friend or older sibling along to the meeting location. Such meetings should take place in a public location in the event of malicious intent.

The Protection of Children from Sexual Predators Act (1998) requires online service providers to report evidence of child pornography and exploitation to the “Cyber Tip Line” at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Although mental health professionals do not have a duty to report online solicitation to authorities, Dombrowski et al. note that it is conceivable that failure to report would be deemed by courts to be inconsistent with prudent and ethical professional practice. For that matter, criminal sanctions for failure to report can be based on child abuse laws that already exist in all states.
5.10 Law Enforcement Exchange (LEX) Program

This countywide initiative is designed to expand access to local, county, state, and national data sources for law enforcement agencies in Palm Beach County who are conducting criminal investigations. It is an intelligence-sharing infrastructure that enables law enforcement agencies to mine each other’s case management systems, instead of phoning one another when conducting investigations. The goals are to increase clearance rates for county law enforcement agencies and to increase efficiency by decreasing the time it takes to clear cases.
Evaluation of COPLINK

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown

TARGET POPULATION: Law enforcement agencies seeking to share information

This article reports on two evaluation studies of COPLINK, an integrated knowledge management system that supports and enhances the crime-fighting activities of law enforcement agencies. Specifically, COPLINK is designed for enhanced information sharing and knowledge management support to individual officers within and across law enforcement agencies. These evaluations focus on system usability and its acceptance in the law enforcement setting.

METHOD/APPROACH

To examine the usability of the system, the investigators combined data analysis methods, including a survey questionnaire, structured interviews, and archival data analysis. Included in the archival data was a summary of user-registered monitoring tasks and alert messages generated and disseminated by COPLINK. A total of 15 detectives from the Tucson Police Department’s Criminal Investigation Division participated in the evaluation. To measure the effectiveness of COPLINK, each participating officer who had received alert messages was asked to assess the usefulness of each alert and to provide a subjective rating of the alert received. Also included in the data collection was relevant contextual information (e.g., case type, search parameters used) and follow-up actions taken upon receiving each alert. To measure efficiency, the investigators recorded the self-reported time required to create a new monitoring profile and time to learn the criteria. The self-reported satisfaction of officers was also recorded.

To determine user acceptance, the investigators administered a questionnaire to 280 officers. They measured such acceptance using individual officers’ intentions to use COPLINK. The choice of intention over actual usage for measuring user acceptance was due to the fact that participants had just completed COPLINK training.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Officer satisfaction; officer intention to use the technology; efficiency—the time officers required to produce a new monitoring profile.
FINDINGS:

- Participants’ ratings of the alerts averaged 5.5 on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with 7 being the most useful.

- As to the efficiency of operating the COPLINK Agent system, most users were able to add a new monitoring profile in 2 to 5 minutes.

- The participants’ responses to a user satisfaction questionnaire averaged 5.5 for 27 items, using 7-point bipolar items (e.g., confusing/clear for screen design, difficult/easy for learnability, etc.) with 7 being the most positive. The favorable assessments observed suggested a relatively high user satisfaction.

- Perceived usefulness of the technology appeared to be the only construct that had a significant effect on behavioral intention. The observed significance may suggest a tendency of an officer to anchor his or her technology acceptance decision from a utility perspective. In addition, efficiency gain was a critical aspect or source of utility.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCE:

Automated Regional Justice Information System  
(San Diego County)

PROGRAM RATING: Unknown

TARGET POPULATION: Law enforcement agencies

This evaluation pertains to the Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS), developed as a Web-based network of criminal justice agencies in San Diego County. This system was developed in order to improve information sharing among these agencies. Officers in the San Diego Sheriff’s Office (SDSO) use ARJIS for tactical analysis, crime analysis, and investigations, and to obtain statistical information. They can also ask the system to notify them when information they need about an individual, location, or vehicle is available from another agency or officer. To use ARJIS, they stop at a satellite police station in the communities they patrol. Comparison officers must make phone calls to obtain the same kinds of information.

The SDSO differs from traditional departments in its use of information technology. More than three-fourths of SDSO officers use their computers 6 to 8 hours a day, while only 30 percent of officers in a comparison agency use their computers that much. Because officers in the non-ARJIS agency are not allowed to use their computers while driving, the number of hours they can spend online is limited.

METHOD/APPROACH
This study examined the views of officers and detectives in the San Diego Sheriff’s Office (SDSO) regarding their views about ARJIS and information technology in general. Their views were then compared to those of officers in a sheriff’s department located in the Southeastern United States that had no automated information-sharing system.

OUTCOME MEASURES
Officers’ views of the information-sharing technology and its impact on arrests and case clearance; crime, arrest, and clearance data.
FINDINGS:

- SDSO officers felt more strongly than officers in the comparison agency that information technology in general increases effectiveness and job performance.

- There was essentially no difference between the two groups in how they saw the role of information sharing in making arrests.

- SDSO officers were likely to think that the automated system increased case clearances. In fact, many of them attributed clearances directly to ARJIS. Even though officers in the comparison agency use computers to obtain information that helps clear cases, without ARJIS they have less immediate access to information that may help to clear cases.

- ARJIS users believe the system helps them in certain tasks, such as investigating, making arrests, and solving crime. However, in solving violent crimes, both groups had virtually the same success rate. In solving property crimes, the agency without ARJIS did much better, almost tripling the number cleared by SDSO officers. The comparison agency’s arrest rate was also much higher. Differences in how arrests and clearances were reported, and other organizational differences (e.g., management philosophy) may account for this unexpected result.

- SDSO officers found it more difficult than comparison agency officers to locate data. Information overload can make it difficult for officers to find what they need.

- Officers from both agencies were dissatisfied with the amount of training offered. Some officers from both agencies said they spent much time training colleagues, indicating that a system of informal, unstructured training had emerged to fill the gap.

COST OF PROGRAM/EVALUATION

No information provided.

REFERENCES:

Assessment

Currently, there is a movement in law enforcement to integrate databases and to share information electronically in order to improve the capacity of agencies to investigate crimes. According to a study by the RAND Corporation, just a third of all law enforcement agencies in the United States currently share these databases (Schwabe et al., 2001). Just two outcome/impact evaluations of these initiatives were identified and both initiatives were rated as “Unknown” with regard to their success in achieving their goals.

One evaluation in Tucson examined officers’ perceptions of the COPLINK integrated knowledge management system and found that the reception given this system was quite positive. Detectives at the Tucson Police Department were generally satisfied with the technology and indicated an intention to use it in the future. The primary reason for this intention was its perceived utility which, in turn, was due to its perceived efficiency gain. The study found that uploading a new monitoring profile took them just 2-5 minutes.

An evaluation of the Automated Regional Justice Information System in San Diego County also relied primarily on officer evaluations of the technology rather than more objective performance indicators. The study compared officers’ views with those in Broward County (FL), a department that did not have such an information system. The evaluation yielded mixed results. Officers from the SDSO felt more strongly than those in the comparison department that this technology improves effectiveness and job performance, including clearing cases. Users felt the technology helped them investigate and solve crimes. Users of the technology were more likely to feel that it made them more productive in activities relating to investigations, case clearances, and arrests. Direct observation found that SDSO personnel did use their computers more and accomplished more tasks, making them more productive. Broward officers had to make phone calls to gather the same information that San Diego officers obtained through the information-sharing system.

On the other hand, arrest and clearance data did not support the notion that information-sharing systems boost clearance and arrest rates. While the comparison department appeared to be selected on the basis of convenience rather than similarity to SDSO, Broward’s Sheriff’s Office overall had higher arrest rates and higher clearance rates for property crime.
More evaluations need to be conducted here, including methodologies that go beyond officer perceptions and that involve efficiency studies, collecting, and analyzing data on whether clearance, arrest, and crime rates are more likely with the presence of integrated databases. Methodologies comparing jurisdictions that are more similar in crime and police organizational philosophies are required to enable researchers to better isolate the impact of the technology itself. At this point, while the testimonials of officers are suggestive, more rigorous studies are required before it can be said with confidence that these information-sharing technologies are beneficial with regard to officer effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the prevention of crime.
6. Conclusions

This report has reviewed outcome evaluations relating to ten types of crime prevention programs or initiatives that operate in Palm Beach County. The overarching goal was to determine the potential of these programs to prevent crime in a cost effective manner. The focus was on evaluations conducted in the last 10-15 years, although several key evaluations conducted earlier were also included. Given the growing popularity of some of these initiatives (e.g., community courts, home detention for youth, programs targeting online sexual predators), the low number of rigorous outcome evaluations in relation to certain types of programs has been striking.

Several challenges were involved in interpreting the results of evaluations of the effectiveness of different types of prevention programs. While the focus in this report was on the outcome or impact of the programs reviewed, it became evident that programs or strategies bearing the same name (e.g., Ceasefire, Pulling Levers, Comprehensive Gang Model) often varied markedly in their approach or emphasis, making it difficult to draw generalizations about a certain program category. Treatment fidelity, too, was an issue as some programs failed to implement key elements, thereby raising the question as to whether the program model had actually been put to the test. Some evaluation designs failed to use an equivalent comparison group to those participating in a program, making it difficult to attribute post-intervention behavioral changes to the program itself. Random assignment to treatment and control conditions was rare and, even where this occurred, there was no guarantee that the groups were very similar prior to the intervention. Furthermore, most evaluations did not address the costs of the new approaches being evaluated relative to conventional approaches. To be useful, the analysis of the economic impact of a program would need to consider the savings associated with a reduction in criminal recidivism, where such a reduction was observed.

The dearth of rigorous evaluations in most of the programming areas covered in this review suggests that, nationally, crime prevention policies and programming still tend to be politically and ideologically driven, as well as based on hunches, rather than evidence-based. In the current fiscal environment, demonstrating that programs are effective and financially feasible may be vital to their survival. The results of this review are sufficiently encouraging to make a case for the implementation with fidelity of many of these crime prevention programs, followed by their careful evaluation with solid experimental or quasi-experimental research designs.
This review identified the most rigorous evaluations available in each program area. Generally, despite the shortcomings mentioned above, the evaluations used a design with some form of comparison group and occasionally incorporated some other controls in order to isolate the impact of the program/strategy being evaluated. Some purely descriptive evaluations were included in program areas where more sophisticated designs were non-existent.

Table 3 indicates that the programs enjoying the strongest empirical support were those dealing with gun and gang violence (e.g., Boston’s Ceasefire, Kansas City Gun Project), mental health courts, and drug courts, followed by youth diversion programs and community courts/justice centers.

A significant number of programs have been rated here as of “Unknown” effectiveness, due to inadequacies in the research methodology used (e.g., comparison groups were lacking, sample sizes were small, or threats to validity were not taken into account). Some of these programs may well prove to be effective, however, the evidence at this time is simply insufficient to rate them as such. A relatively small number of programs were rated as “Ineffective”, meaning that more rigorous research designs have not found that they reduce recidivism or produce other intended outcomes.

The programs/strategies that appear to have the least empirical support at this point are drug overdose prevention programs, reentry programs, those targeting online predators, and law enforcement exchange programs. Some of these programs may ultimately be found in future evaluations to effectively prevent crime. While they may be intuitively sensible initiatives, they are currently products of faith rather than proof. Further evaluation of these initiatives is required to draw more definitive conclusions as to their utility.
### Table 3 - Ratings of Programs/Strategies Based on the Evaluations Reviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Strategy</th>
<th># Model or Promising</th>
<th># Ineffective</th>
<th># Unknown Effectiveness</th>
<th># Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gun and Gang Violence</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Courts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Courts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Diversion/Alternatives To Incarceration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Courts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed and Seed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Overdose Prevention</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reentry Programs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeting Online Predators</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement Exchange</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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