

TELEMASP BULLETIN

TEXAS LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM

April 1998

Vol. 5, No. 1

Merging Community-Oriented and Crime-Specific Policing

Part Two of Seven

Neighborhood-Centered Approaches (*Continued*)

This is one of a series of bulletins describing the integration of community policing and crime-specific strategies among Texas police agencies. The strategies are categorized into Neighborhood-centered Approaches, Targeted Enforcement, Youth and Gang Programs, and Problem-oriented Tactics. Staff and consultants of the Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT) and the Texas Regional Community Policing Institute made over 20 site visits to Texas agencies employing these forms of crime-specific strategies. This year's Executive Issues Seminar Series, and this bulletin series, describes a sample of programs that appear to be working among police efforts to reduce crime in Texas.

This bulletin describes neighborhood-centered approaches in Waco, Beaumont, and Arlington. Waco's Neighborhood Services Section illustrates the use of concentrated resources upon problem-

atic situations. Beaumont's effort to improve public housing environments has resulted in tangible crime reduction, decreased calls-for-service, and better quality of life. Arlington is undertaking a dramatic change in deployment, organizing patrol assignments around beats rather than shifts. All of the neighborhood-centered approaches described in this series of bulletins share the characteristic of a central focus on crime reduction while employing flexible strategies often viewed as quality of life initiatives.

**Special Bulletin
Co-Sponsored by the
Texas Regional Community
Policing Institute**

*Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas
Texas Regional Community Policing Institute*

Neighborhood Services Section Waco, Texas, Police Department

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Program Summary

The Neighborhood Services Section uses an integrated approach of investigators, Neighborhood-Oriented Police Officers (NOPs), bicycle officers, Citizens on Patrol, and Neighborhood Associations to address crime and quality of life problems within defined Waco communities.

Site Description

Waco, Texas, is located in Central Texas, roughly halfway between Dallas and Austin on Interstate Highway 35. Waco is the home of Baylor University, numerous museums, and serves as a center for shopping, entertainment and banking for this portion of Central Texas. Covering approximately 93 square miles, the resident population is approximately 104,000 people while the city's service population is estimated to be over 140,000. Roughly 26% of Waco's residents are African American and 14% are Hispanic.

The Waco Police Department has 221 sworn officers and 72 non-sworn personnel. Pre-service training is completed at the department's in-house TCLEOSE certified academy. In addition, the police department sends officers to other schools as needed. The chief and several command officers regularly attend the LEMIT Executive Issues Seminars and the department has several graduates of the LEMIT Graduate Management Institute. The city administration has divided the city into 24 neighborhoods which roughly match the patrol beats. The WPD is organized into the Administrative Services Division, Patrol Division, Criminal Investigation Division, and Support Services Division. The Neighborhood Services Section is part of the Patrol Division.

Program Description

The intent of the Neighborhood Services Section is to build partnerships between the community and the police in order to reduce crime and improve the quality of life for Waco citizens. Neighborhoods where these officers focus their activities are those who have the highest crime and service needs.

The section includes:

- Bicycle officers
- Housing officers
- Neighborhood Service Officers
- Investigators
- Community-Oriented Policing Officer

All of these officers work cooperatively in a team approach to not only respond to complaints but to also proactively identify problems which need to be resolved.

Officers are assigned largely on a geographic basis. For example, each neighborhood police officer has six neighborhoods for which they provide proactive problem solving, particularly with a focus on (1) identifying problems involving disorder and disruption of quality of life and (2) responding to specific complaints and concerns of citizens. Investigators are assigned to districts which are geographic areas overlapping the neighborhoods. The investigators are responsible for all crimes in their areas except for homicide and sexual assaults.

There is a great deal of communications and interplay between the police and community in this program. Neighborhood Services Section officers have found that working with the neighborhood associations, communicating with the Citizens on Patrol, and interacting with the beat officer are essential elements for success.

Crime control efforts rely on several techniques. The use of offender targeting, identification of crime hot spots in the neighborhoods along with the characteristics of those crimes, and the use of a crime prediction model all help focus resources more effectively.

Offender targeting is somewhat akin to tactical intelligence wherein information from investigations, citizen information, and officer observations is collated to identify primary criminals in the neighborhoods. Once a person is identified as an active criminal, the different police resources focus on that individual in order to arrest and, hopefully, convict him or her.

The identification of hot spots is a crime analysis tool to determine geographic areas where criminal activity has "spiked" or remained at levels beyond the norm. The hot spot may take two basic forms. One form is that there is an increase in overall criminal activity, perhaps as a result of social disintegration of the neighborhood. The other form of hot spot is an increase of a specific type of crime because of active offenders and/or neighborhood characteristics (such as a rash of burglaries in an apartment complex). Obviously, the former is more difficult than the latter to deal with.

Nonetheless, the Neighborhood Services Section uses all of its resources to tailor a response to the hot spots.

The crime prediction model is a statistical analysis system developed by Baylor University for the Waco Police Department. Relying on reported crimes, the prediction model projects crime trends on a weekly basis for each WPD reporting district. The model forecasts offenses based upon crime type, days, and times and is about 80% accurate. This model permits planning for resource deployment involving strategic responses to crimes.

Thus, the Neighborhood Services Section attempts to provide "holistic policing" through integrated service delivery to explicitly defined neighborhoods.

Program Effects

Discernible results have emerged since the implementation of the Neighborhood Services Section. These include:

- Crime has had an overall drop of 54% in one year.
- Arrests have increased dramatically; mostly adult offenders. The increase in arrests is the product of:
 - Greater offender targeting
 - Neighborhood team assignment of investigators
 - More information provided by the community
- There are visible signs of a notably increased quality of life in the neighborhoods. These visible signs are reinforced by anecdotes of "success stories" and comments from the residents.
- The number of criminal nuisance abatement cases brought to trial by the police department has increased significantly.
- Officers working in the Neighborhood Services Section have had a significant increase in job satisfaction. This increase is attributed to:
 - Officers are seeing positive results of their work
 - Officers are receiving positive feedback from the community and are given a feeling of appreciation
 - Working in productive teams with increased internal communications provides a more desirable working environment.

Critical Factors

The program and its successes in Waco were experienced with greater speed than may otherwise have occurred because of external funding received from various grant programs. In addition, the WPD received extensive assistance from the community in the form of donated facilities, furniture, and other equipment and materials. While these resources were unquestionably useful, the WPD personnel feel that a Neighborhood Services model could work in most agencies without new resources. There would, however, have to be a reallocation of resources as well as other changes. Critical to the success of the Neighborhood Service Section were:

- Commitment by the administration to experiment with an alternate organizational structure. This commitment must extend a sufficient amount of patience to give new initiatives time to work.
- Along with commitment, there must be flexibility to permit non-traditional approaches to deployment and service delivery.
- As organized in Waco, a team management approach appears to be most effective. This includes a flat organizational structure, team (rather than individual) goals, and sufficient autonomy to make resource deployment decisions.
- Because crime and quality of life problems tend to be most frequently characterized on a neighborhood basis, geographic deployment of personnel is most effective rather than a centralized deployment scheme.
- Both proactive and reactive models of policing must be used. For solving problems and responding to both citizen complaints and concerns, a proactive model is most effective. For handling reported offenses and calls for service, a reactive model is necessary.
- Targeting and analysis of offenders, crimes and community problems provide the clearest picture of what must be accomplished within neighborhoods, as well as providing the wisest use of resources.
- Developing trust and communications between the police and community is essential.
- Recognize that there will be internal resistance to this change. Police personnel need to be re-educated about the way the effective policing is done. Explain that such a program does not "take away" from patrol, but enhances it.
 - Supervisors and managers are more difficult to change than patrol officers.

Public Housing Unit Beaumont, Texas, Police Department

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Program Summary

In 1994, the presence of gangs and growing violent crime in Beaumont's public housing complexes was a signal that some police initiative was needed to deal with the problem. With aid from a federal grant, eight police officers were assigned to the newly created Public Housing Unit. The unit's goal was defined as "improving the quality of life for the residents through proactive law enforcement, public awareness, and education."

Site Description

Beaumont is located in East Texas, approximately 80 miles east-northeast of Houston. The county seat of Jefferson County, the city has a resident population of approximately 120,000 of which about 40% are African American and around 7% are Hispanic. Being the employment and commercial center of the area, Beaumont's weekday population is roughly 350,000. Geographically, the city covers about 75 square miles.

The police department has 265 sworn officers and 85 non-sworn personnel. The department has moved to a hiring model in recent years of employing officers who are already licensed Texas peace officers. The primary feature of this approach is cost-savings for pre-service training. Mandated in-service training is frequently provided by in-house trainers. The chief as well as several other command staff are graduates of the LEMIT Graduate Management Institute and regularly attend the LEMIT Executive Issues Seminars.

Program Description

The housing unit is supervised by a lieutenant and a sergeant with eight officers permanently assigned to seven public housing complexes. While assigned to fixed shifts, the officers are given the ability to flex their hours with supervisory approval in order to meet the problem solving and crime control needs of their complexes.

The unit is functionally organized in the patrol division. Officers respond to calls-for-service as well as being proactively involved in problem solving. In many cases, residents will ask specifically for "their officer," preferring to wait for a police response in order to have "their officer"

respond to the call. Officers have been given the authority to investigate most of the cases in their complexes rather than have the crime assigned to a detective.

Housing unit officers submit weekly reports of activities to their supervisor as an accountability measure. The sergeant also speaks regularly with the apartment complex managers as an added avenue for officer evaluation. An unexpected benefit to the unit has been increased officer job satisfaction, because officers can see positive successes to the work they do.

During the six months prior to implementation of the housing unit, there were 1,550 offense calls in the seven apartment complexes ranging from homicide to disorderly conduct. Because of this large number of calls and the soaring crime rate, the Unit adopted a "zero tolerance" policy. After the first six months of the unit's operation, crime calls dropped by 13%. To achieve this drop, housing unit officers implemented several programs, the most important of which was the trespass warning program.

In this program, complexes posted required no trespass warning signs to meet legal requirements. Officers identified people who had no legitimate business on the property (e.g., typically drug dealers and non-resident gang members) and issued them a written trespass warning. The warnings were entered into the computer system for an easy records check. If a person was stopped again and found to have been given the warning, they were arrested for criminal trespass. The program has been embraced by both the residents and apartments' management personnel as an important tool for controlling the quality of life. In addition, the trespass warnings, coupled with the regular presence of officers, has contributed to a virtual elimination of burglaries in the complexes.

While the trespass warnings are used in all of the public housing complexes, other programs have been introduced on a locale-by-locale basis to meet problem needs defined by officers. These include a wide range of programs, a sample of which include:

- "Knock and Talk" wherein officers initiate contact with residents at their apartments.
- Ticket/warrant work program by which a resident who receives a citation can do community service work in the complex in lieu of a fine.
- Bike patrols were started wherein officers team up and patrol multiple complexes each week.
- A truancy program with the Beaumont Independent School District was developed which included weekly printouts of children in the complexes who have been missing from school. The officer makes visits to the children and their parents to discuss the problem.



- Officers have taken young people on a wide variety of field trips, such as the police department, various businesses, parks, and a canoe trip in order to give them varied experiences and opportunities.
- The “Hooked on Learning” program assists children with educational activities including tutoring.
- Bicycle safety programs at the complexes where officers teach the children both traffic safety and bike care.

While crime calls dropped, “awareness calls” increased during this same time period. Awareness calls are defined to include a wide range of things including suspect sightings, information on crime, nuisance calls, gambling, prowlers, and calls for general assistance. These calls permit officers to respond proactively to solve problems. The unit stresses that they encourage awareness calls and define these as a measure of success. Previously, most public housing residents viewed the police as “the enemy” and would avoid talking with them as much as possible; to initiate a conversation with an officer was particularly rare. Thus, the growth of awareness calls reflects greater support of and trust in the police as well as an overall more open channel of communications between the police and public.

An assessment of the unit’s effectiveness found interesting results. In the apartment complexes, since the housing unit was formed, effects have included:

- The violent crime rate has dropped.
- The police department receives fewer “nuisance calls” from the complexes.
- Overall, the calls-for-service have dropped.
- Communications, trust, and cooperation between the officers and citizens living in the complexes has dramatically increased.
- There is a better quality of life in public housing complexes.
- Housing unit officers have an overall average of more than 350 arrests per year for Index Crimes.
- The housing unit officers have assisted or facilitated in well over 100 evictions of problem residents, mostly in drug-related cases.

Critical Factors

Among the critical factors contributing to the housing unit’s successes are:

1. The public housing complexes were fully assessed to determine the crime and disorder problems. Assessments included:

- a. Reported crime rates and types.
- b. Analysis of calls received by the police at each complex.
- c. An examination of the physical environment of the housing complex and contiguous areas to determine the environment’s impact on crime and disorder (e.g., fences, shrubbery, lighting, alleys, number of accesses to grounds, character of the contiguous area.)
2. Goals were clearly established to guide officers’ activities:
 - a. Reduce violent crime.
 - b. Reduce calls for service.
 - c. Increase citizen-police communication to aid in control of crime and disorder.
 - d. Help develop the best possible living atmosphere for residents.
3. Commitment by police management to support the unit, even if no grant funds were available.
4. Officers were given:
 - a. Empowerment to take actions and make decisions to accomplish goals.
 - b. Flexibility in hours and approaches to meet the needs of their particular complex.
5. Officers must be permanently assigned to a housing complex in order to get to know the residents and understand all aspects of emerging problems.
6. A youth-oriented approach appears to have the greatest impact on problems. This includes programs and activities designed for youth of various ages to keep them busy and give them an avocation. Also, getting to know young people on a personal basis helps in communications. (This was evidenced by the fact that housing officers have been invited to birthday parties, graduations, weddings, etc. of “their residents.”)
7. Dedicated officers are critical to success. Personnel must be self-starters who work well with minimal supervision, who are creative, people-oriented, and willing to take the extra effort in their work.
8. There must be regular communications and cooperation between:
 - a. Housing unit officers and both patrol officers and detectives.
 - b. Officers assigned at each of the housing complexes.
 - c. Officers and apartment managers.
 - d. Officers and other city departments (i.e., fire, recreation, public health, etc.)
9. Officers need to have an attitude of being tough on crime while at the same time providing assistance on quality of life issues.
10. Important tools for the housing officers also include:
 - a. Criminal trespass warnings and enforcement.
 - b. Curfew enforcement (day and night).



Geographic Policing Model Arlington, Texas, Police Department

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Program Summary

Relying on geographic distribution of personnel; team management; empowerment of line, supervisory, and management personnel; and generalization of some detective assignments, the Arlington Police Department is implementing a beat-centered deployment system intended to be more responsive to neighborhood problems.

Site Description

Arlington, Texas, is located in the heart of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, roughly equi-distant between the two cities and roughly 10 miles south of the DFW Airport. The residents of Arlington tend to be commuters working in Dallas or Fort Worth. However, the city is also home to Six Flags Over Texas and the Texas Rangers Baseball Stadium, both of which bring added tourists to the city limits. Covering approximately 123 square miles, the resident population is approximately 291,600 people. Roughly 9% of Arlington's residents are Hispanic, 9% are African American and 7% are Asian/Pacific Islander.

The Arlington Police Department has 478 sworn officers and 148 non-sworn personnel. Pre-service training is completed at the department's in-house TCLEOSE certified academy. In addition, the police department sends officers to other schools as needed. The chief and command officers regularly attend the LEMIT Executive Issues Seminars and some supervisory and management personnel have attended the LEMIT Graduate Management Institute. The city is divided into three patrol sectors which are going through the transition of being geographically-based.

Program Description

The Arlington Police Department has slowly been implementing community policing over several years. The department felt that good progress had been made; however, they felt it was time to take the "next step" for full implementation. The nature of that step was unclear. To some extent it was also a gamble since a "misstep" could undermine their previous efforts both within the department and the community. After looking at the research, conducting site visits at other police agencies, and discussions with a wide range of people, it was felt that the next step would involve several elements.

One element was to organize the police department on a geographic basis to meet the realistic needs of the community. A second element was the need to re-think the way police services and citizen needs were fulfilled. The third element was to change the management structure to an approach which would best facilitate the first two elements.

A plan was developed, and starting with the opening of a new station in East Arlington, the geographic-based policing model was implemented. Importantly, the East Arlington area represented the greatest problem area in the city with respect to reported crime, calls-for-service, and disorder.


As an inherent part of this model, lieutenants, rather than being shift commanders, have a 24-hour responsibility for a defined geographic area. They are responsible for monitoring crime and police response issues and coordinating all police activities in this area. To accomplish this, communications must be ongoing and comprehensive.

As part of the new management approach, rather than being traditional supervisors, sergeants essentially became team leaders, responsible for coordinating a comprehensive police response to a patrol beat, which has roughly 10,000 residents. Three sergeants work for each lieutenant, although they do not have shift assignments, per se. They work 10-hour shifts, overlapping to enhance communications and provide time for coordinating responses. Sergeants also rotate working hours in order to have a better understanding of the geographic areas at all times of day.

Importantly, sergeants are coaches and team leaders, making their roles more strategic and proactive. The sergeants were brought into the planning process early to socialize them into the new model and to give them ownership in the new plan. From this experience it was clear that sergeants wanted a more active role in management, thus the right avenue had to be found—this approach permitted that. It should be noted that sergeants also handle calls-for-service if that is what is needed for the team. Interestingly, detectives will also frequently respond to a call, backing up the uniformed officer. While this virtually never happened before, it has become commonplace because the detectives feel an ownership interest in the geographic area.


As the program developed, one concern expressed by sergeants was how to evaluate officers under their supervision. This issue was at the heart of the new plan. In order to validly evaluate officers, it had to be clear what they were to accomplish. Thus, criteria related to problem identification and solving in their geographic areas was a central theme.

Similarly, detectives' responsibilities have been generalized, and they are responsible for criminal investigations within the patrol beat area (rather than being responsible for a crime type). The detective sergeant works largely as a case



manager and facilitates investigations. Since all police responses are geographic-based, the detective sergeant reports to the patrol lieutenant, all of whom work as a coordinated team. The detectives attend the patrol briefings, and there is an information exchange at the line level pertaining to the specific geographic area thus making the communications more substantive.

Patrol officers are also responsible for geographic areas and take a proactive approach to crime and problems within their areas. They actively develop partnerships with community members for both information and "action" purposes. Officers also answer calls-for-service; however, they have some latitude in prioritizing their own calls based on their knowledge of the neighborhood, issues, personalities, and priorities. Overall, citizens have responded positively to this, knowing that they can page "their own officer" to deal with problems rather than going through central dispatch. This alone has reduced the number of calls-for-service.



Just as with any new endeavor, there have been a few problems that have had to be overcome. Perhaps the greatest problem is that of organizational change—getting officers to change their attitudes about the police role and the way they do their job requires constant attention and reinforcement. Officers are skeptical about the department's commitment and whether promises will be kept—these factors must be addressed forthrightly.

Once personnel begin to accept the change, challenging their creativity is important. Officers frequently will attempt to emulate what others are doing instead of developing their own ideas. While emulation can work in certain circumstances, this is not always the case. For example, neighborhoods have different characteristics and "personalities"—as such, the types of partnerships forged between the police and community will frequently have to be different.

Once officers have developed a strong relationship with their neighborhood, another unusual problem has occurred. When the department tries to reassign officers (including sergeants and lieutenants), there is resistance from the neighborhood because the citizens perceive that they are losing "their officer."

Program Effects

Based on a review of experimentation thus far, the Arlington Police Department has experienced a number of positive effects from the geographic policing model.

- Crime has reduced in all categories.
- Citizens' quality of life has increased.
- The ability to manage the department's critical calls for service has not changed.
- Job satisfaction among personnel at all levels has increased.

- Police department internal communications has increased.
- Communications between the police and the public has increased.
- It *appears* that the geographic-based model has been more cost-effective; however, this has been difficult to determine.

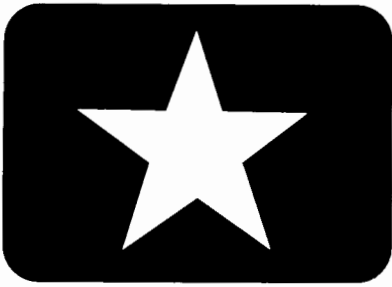
While the department recognizes that other factors may also have contributed to these effects, experience suggests that the geographic-based program has been a primary factor.

Critical Factors

Implementation of the program and any successes that have been experienced are the product of several salient features:

- Administrators must make a commitment to the program in both words and actions.
- Because of the comparatively "radical" nature of this program, changes must be made slowly in order for personnel to accept them.
- Similarly, the change must be made as painless as possible—consideration must be given to the need for personnel to adjust to their new roles and responsibilities.
- Patrol officers must be given narrow objectives to accomplish at first in order for them to see some "wins" and adjust to the new system. Examples of narrow objectives include having an officer develop a crime watch; have officers identify crime hot spots in their geographic areas and then develop a response; or simply increase the number of community meetings which the officer attends.
- Officers must be empowered to make decisions about handling calls, prioritizing problems, and developing innovations to respond to community concerns.
- Personnel at all levels of the organization must be involved in the change process. Their involvement must be "real," not a facade.
- Any changes must be contemporary and useful; not cosmetic.
- The focus must not be solely on crime but also on fear of crime and disorder.
- Administrators, managers, and supervisors must listen to criticisms and be willing to make adjustments as necessary.

Beyond these programmatic factors, the Arlington Police Department feels that the four year college requirement, which they implemented in 1985, has been an important factor in ushering in change. It is their opinion that college educated officers respond to change more rapidly and are more willing (and able) to be creative in resolving problems.



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A Member of The Texas State University System

TELEMASP Monthly Bulletins,
ISSN 1075-3702, are produced
under an agreement with the

Police Research Center
Sam Houston State University
Larry T. Hoover, Ph.D., Director
Jamie L. Tillerson, Program Manager

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This project was co-sponsored by cooperative agreement #97-CK-WX-0020 awarded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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