

# TELEMASP BULLETIN

## TEXAS LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM

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### Merging Community-Oriented and Crime-Specific Policing

Part Three of Seven

#### Targeted Enforcement

*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.*

Targeted enforcement efforts may be aimed at particular offenses, particular types of offenders, problematic locations, or a combination. This bulletin includes descriptions of the Irving parolee enforcement effort—focused on offenders, the

Northeast Tarrant County Multi-Agency Street Crimes Unit—addressing offenders, offenses, and locations, the El Paso Auto Theft Task Force—focused upon a particular offense but employing strategies targeting particular offenders and locations, and the San Antonio Youth Firearms Violence Initiative—targeting particular offenders with an array of strategies. The term “tactical patrol” is often employed to describe such efforts. We felt “targeted enforcement” was more appropriate, since agencies now typically combine patrol, investigative, and preventive strategies to target a particular crime problem.

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



## **Parolee Enforcement Irving, Texas**

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### **Program Summary**

The Irving Police Department has begun focusing enforcement attention on parolees living in their jurisdiction, particularly those with outstanding warrants. Initial efforts revealed that a high percentage of parolees did have outstanding warrants and that many could be arrested and re-incarcerated.

### **Site Description**

Irving is a city of 170,000 residents and 69 square miles located in Dallas County between Dallas and Fort Worth. The police department has 283 sworn officers and 129 full-time civilian employees. The department responded to 130,385 calls for service in 1996 and took 9,479 Part I offense reports. The Irving Police Department is organized into three main bureaus—Field Operations, Investigative Services, and Administrative Services.

### **Program Description**

This effort represents a new strategy for the existing Tactical Unit within the department's Special Operations Division. According to the department, the Tactical Unit was searching for an additional strategy to employ during a period of declining street crime. Initially, the unit considered focusing on outstanding county warrants, and then thought of using the monthly parolee list provided by the state. When the department checked, it was discovered that a high percentage of parolees living in Irving had outstanding warrants, both state and county. At about the same time, the department became aware of a bulletin that explained how to obtain parolee intelligence information from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). A focus on parolees seemed promising since these individuals were already "in the system," parole officers would be available to help, and the subjects would be unlikely to be bonded out upon arrest and quite likely to be re-incarcerated.

Under the new strategy adopted in early 1997, when the monthly parolee list is received, the department immediately conducts a thorough check for outstanding state and county warrants on every individual listed (the same procedure is followed with the list of registered sex offenders). For all those parolees found to be wanted, further records are checked, including TDCJ files, to gather information on addresses, vehicles, associates, etc. The Tactical Unit then makes a concerted effort to locate and arrest the wanted individuals. This effort by the Tactical Unit can be augmented with information and resources from the Gang Unit and the FBI Violent Crime Task Force, as appropriate.

The Tactical Unit has also adopted several related strategies: (1) they will conduct surveillance on parolees suspected of being engaged in current criminal activity, especially those with particularly violent histories; (2) they have begun to work more closely with parole officers; and (3) they regularly peruse the county warrant list for familiar names and for individuals with multiple outstanding warrants. In general, they have adopted a more offender-focused strategy to supplement their previous offense-focused efforts.

### **Program Effects**

No information is available concerning the impact of this new strategy on crime in Irving—for one thing, it is probably too new. Also, it is not clear whether this strategy will be effective over the long-term, at least at its current level, or whether its productivity will diminish after the initial glut of outstanding warrants are served on parolees. Proactive offender-focused police strategies are often difficult to maintain, once the "cream of the crop" offenders are initially apprehended.

Initially, however, the strategy has been quite productive. Over 50 wanted parolees were quickly identified at the start of the effort and many were arrested within three months. According to one of the tactical sergeants, "the word is out on the street that Irving is looking for parolees with warrants," and the list of wanted parolees has in fact gotten 17% shorter than when the strategy was first implemented.

### **Critical Factors**

Three factors, besides the improved availability of TDCJ information, may have combined to make this



parolee-focus a particularly good strategy in Irving. One is that the department is large enough to field a full-time tactical unit—it is currently headed by a lieutenant and is staffed by two sergeants and 12 officers (this includes two K-9 officers). Another is that the falling street crime rate enabled the tactical unit to consider adopting new, more proactive strategies. And finally, Irving may have more than its share of parolees. The city's location next to Dallas, the fact that the Irving Independent School District serves a portion of Dallas, and an exceptionally large number of apartment dwellings may make Irving particularly attractive to a disproportionate share of TDCJ's parolees.

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### **Multi-Agency Street Crimes Unit Northeast Tarrant County North Richland Hills, Texas**

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#### **Program Summary**

Five small to medium-sized law enforcement agencies in northeast Tarrant County have entered into a formal agreement to staff and utilize a multi-agency street crimes unit. In addition, although not party to the formal agreement, the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department also participates in the unit. The unit provides three types of services within participating jurisdictions: (1) immediate investigative response to major crimes; (2) coordinated gang enforcement; and (3) targeted street crime enforcement.

#### **Site Description**

The six agencies that participate in the Multi-Agency Northeast Street Crimes Unit (NSCU) are:

- North Richland Hills Police Department
- Richland Hills Police Department
- Haltom City Police Department
- Watauga Department of Public Safety
- Southlake Police Department
- Tarrant County Sheriff's Department

The five participating local jurisdictions are basically located within the northeast quadrant of Tarrant County between Fort Worth and the Denton county line. They are "buffered" from Dallas County to the east and by Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, which have their own separate multi-agency gang task force (which is primarily prevention- and education-focused rather than enforcement-oriented).

#### **Program Description**

The primary motivation for the creation of the Northeast Street Crimes Unit was a drive-by shooting that occurred in Watauga in 1994, which led that department's chief to seek assistance from neighboring agencies. The chief of North Richland Hills, Jerry McGlasson, saw the value of having a permanent capacity for such inter-agency assistance, and began discussions which culminated in the creation of the NSCU.

The impetus for the creation of the unit, a major crime, led it to take the form of a street crime unit, rather than the more typical multi-agency gang, drug, or auto theft task force. The unit has subsequently focused considerable attention on gang enforcement, but it has not been required to limit its attention to gangs. This provides more flexibility and responsiveness to local crime problems.

The NSCU was formally established by means of an "interlocal agreement" that specified its intent as providing "an organized, well coordinated flexible unit for the purpose of investigating crimes; providing lawful surveillance of suspects; and, enforcing laws in areas involving juvenile crime, gang activity, organized criminal activity or other violations of the law requiring the attention of the Unit." This agreement described the responsibilities of the participating jurisdictions, the authority of unit officers, distribution of the unit's seized assets, and similar details.

The NSCU is governed by a board of directors composed of the chiefs of the participating departments (or their designees). Each department is expected to assign at least one sworn officer full-time to the unit. The unit's operating budget is established each year and participating departments are "billed" in proportion to their jurisdiction's portion of the population of the entire area served by the NSCU. For FY1997-98,

individual department contributions to the unit's operating budget ranged from \$1,588 (Richland Hills) to \$10,590 (North Richland Hills). The unit's overall budget for the year, \$26,475, was higher than usual due to the purchase of office equipment and the cost of utilities associated with the move to a facility away from the North Richland Hills Police Department's headquarters building.

As of October, 1997 the actual full-time staffing of the NSCU was as follows:

North Richland Hills	Sergeant + Officer
Haltom City	Officer
Richland Hills	Officer
Watauga	Officer
Tarrant County	Officer
Southlake	inactive (department short-handed)

The typical length of assignment for an officer to the NSCU has been two to three years, but this varies by agency and is not regulated by the interlocal agreement. It has been the practice since the unit's inception for the North Richland Hills Police Department to provide a sergeant as well as an officer, and for the sergeant to serve as the unit's commander. This is not specified in the interlocal agreement either, but rather has evolved as the logical contribution of the unit's largest participating local agency. On a day-to-day basis, this sergeant reports to a captain within the NRHPD, but he is also answerable to the unit's board of directors, and as a practical matter has regular contact with the heads of each of the participating local agencies. Reportedly, the unit has not experienced any significant conflicts over the allocation of its time and resources among the participating jurisdictions.

The NSCU basically provides three types of services within participating jurisdictions, as follows:

**Investigative response.** The unit responds to major incidents and can either provide on-scene assistance (canvassing for witnesses, identification and questioning of gang members) or actually take over the investigation and carry it to a conclusion. If the unit is off-duty when a major crime occurs, it is subject to call out. In the case of gang-related events such as drive-by shootings, the unit makes a particular effort to quickly identify and arrest the perpetrators and to head off any

retaliatory shootings. Because of the unit's gang-related expertise and familiarity with regional gangsters, especially Asian gang members, participating departments rely on them quite heavily for these services.

**Gang enforcement.** The NSCU serves as the gang unit for its participating departments, providing both intelligence and enforcement services. The unit maintains an extensive database (including photos) of gang members that is shared, on-line, with other police agencies in Tarrant and Dallas Counties. According to unit members, the largely suburban area's gang problem is a combination of (1) hybrid, transient gangs modeled after more hard-core urban gangs and (2) newer but more stable Asian gangs. These gangs engage more in property crime than in drug trafficking (perhaps preying on the affluence of the area's residents). The hybrid, transient gangs tend to favor such traditional property crimes as theft and robbery, whereas the Asian gangs have also engaged in more sophisticated fraud, cloning, and counterfeiting schemes.

**Targeted enforcement.** The NSCU also provides tactical patrol and directed patrol services, either in marked or unmarked vehicles. The unit responds to crime patterns in any of the participating jurisdictions, using surveillance, decoys, foot patrol, or mobile patrol. During 1997, two of the targeted problems that the unit addressed were auto burglaries at a large retail outlet and garage burglaries in a residential area.

### Program Effects

Unfortunately, no clear evidence of the Multi-Agency Street Crime Unit's impact is available, and, in fact, such evidence would be challenging to develop given the unit's complex mission and multiple jurisdictional responsibilities. It was claimed that the unit has a 100% conviction rate, that a number of targeted enforcement actions have led to successful apprehensions, and that area gang members have a high level of fear and respect for the NSCU.

Clearly, though, despite any solid evidence from which to draw conclusions about effectiveness, the unit seems to be a logical and sensible response by the participating agencies. None of these agencies, on their own, could afford to deploy such a unit, but collectively they can. The NSCU provides a very real and important

capacity to the participating jurisdictions that they otherwise would not have.

### **Critical Factors**

Several factors stand out as contributing to what appears to be a successful program. One is the formal agreement by which each agency bound itself to contribute staff to the unit and to allow all unit members to have sworn authority throughout the participating jurisdictions. Another is that the unit's members have apparently been carefully chosen, have developed good relations among each other and with personnel in the participating departments, and have gone out of their way not to act like prima donnas.

The NSCU's multi-faceted mission also seems to have been well-chosen. The investigative and targeted enforcement roles allow the unit to be responsive to each participating jurisdiction, so that they all feel as if they are getting something tangible for their investments. Moreover, this is a good old-fashioned crime-fighting return for their investment, one likely to satisfy elected officials as well as police executives. The gang-related mission, on the other hand, gives the unit a clear expertise not shared by many personnel in the participating departments, especially as it relates to emerging Asian gangs.

The unit's overall mission seems to be about the right "size" as well. That is, none of the three roles (investigative response, gang enforcement, targeted enforcement) by themselves is probably sufficient to justify a full-time commitment of six to seven sworn personnel for this region, but collectively they may be.

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### **Auto Theft Task Force El Paso, Texas**

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### **Program Summary**

The El Paso Police Department participates in a county-wide Auto Theft Task Force that responds to the high rate of auto theft in the area. The problem is heavily influenced by the city's proximity to the Mexican border. The police department has implemented several patrol and investigative tactics in an effort to reduce the problem.

### **Site Description**

El Paso has a population of approximately 614,000, covers 257 square miles, and is bordered on the south by Mexico. Together with Juarez, Mexico, it has a metropolitan region population of 2.5 million, making it the most populated border area in the country. The police department has an authorized strength of 1,182 sworn officers and 230 nonsworn positions and investigated 45,134 Part I crimes in 1996. The department is divided into two major divisions—Operations and Administrative Services—as well as five regional commands.

### **Program Description**

The El Paso County Auto Theft Task Force is funded in part by a grant, in its sixth year in 1997, from the Auto Theft Prevention Authority, but the city police department contributes substantial resources of its own to augment the effort. The grant funds 19 sworn personnel and one civilian, while the city provides 14 additional sworn officers and several more nonsworn staff. The task force is headed by a lieutenant from the El Paso Police Department and includes three sergeants, nine investigators, 15 patrol officers, two crime prevention officers, and three officers assigned to abandoned vehicle-related duties.

Since 1991, El Paso County has experienced 4,000 to 5,500 auto thefts per year (over 95% from the city), and



has historically had low rates of vehicle recovery and low case clearance rates. The ratio of vehicle recoveries to vehicle thefts is generally below 50%, and half of recoveries are typically of vehicles stolen in other jurisdictions. Thus, the actual recovery rate for vehicles stolen within El Paso County jurisdictions is more like 20-25%. Many of the stolen vehicles are taken across one of the county's five border crossings into Mexico, but the exact proportion is unknown. The case clearance rate is usually in the 5-10% range.

The border phenomenon raises at least two issues for the police department. From an enforcement standpoint, border crossings provide a possible enforcement opportunity, and the department does work closely with U.S. Customs. Because most stolen vehicles can easily be taken across the border before they are reported stolen, most enforcement efforts at the border are in the form of periodic checkpoints. These checkpoints, of course, have the effect of slowing traffic and commerce across the border, so they must be used judiciously.

The other issue raised by the border is investigative. If Mexican authorities cooperated fully with the El Paso Auto Theft Task Force, many vehicles stolen from El Paso could probably be located in and around Juarez, arrests could be made and cases could be cleared. However, such cooperation is less complete than it could be, so that, in fact, few vehicles are recovered and returned across the border to their owners, and few cases are made. The activities of the task force fall primarily into four areas: enforcement, border checkpoints, investigation, and crime prevention.

**Enforcement.** The task force deploys two enforcement teams, each headed by a sergeant. These teams base their tactics and target areas on crime analysis information and primarily work at current hot spots. They usually work in the evenings, utilizing unmarked cars, surveillance techniques, and decoy or "bait" vehicles. The nature of auto theft hot spots has tended to vary over time—a few years ago, mall parking lots predominated, but now apartment complexes and other residential areas are more popular. When the task force was first created, the enforcement teams found it relatively easy to make arrests using these tactics, but over time it has become more difficult, presumably because auto thieves have adapted their methods.

**Border checkpoints.** Checkpoints are used periodically at the three main bridge crossings into Juarez, Mexico. At one time, these checkpoints were set up for 8-12 hours at a time, but now 4-hour checkpoints are more common. Again, auto thieves have adapted their methods, so that a surprise element is important to make the checkpoints effective. These checkpoints are usually employed in conjunction with the contraband smuggling unit of U.S. Customs. Safety is an important consideration, as "bridge runners" who simply try to drive their stolen vehicles through the checkpoint at a high rate of speed are not uncommon. The use of checkpoints had fallen off during the last year or two but has recently been increased.

**Investigations.** Fraud investigations, organized crime investigations, and other more investigative (as opposed to enforcement) tactics are perhaps the most promising developments lately. Fraud investigations are usually conducted in collaboration with insurance companies, and may focus on individuals or on car dealerships. The organized crime approach would probably be more effective if it were not for the fact that the organized groups involved in auto theft are usually based in Mexico. One specific approach that the task force has emphasized lately is to have an investigator interview every person arrested for auto theft, even when the individual is arrested by another unit, such as patrol. These interviews often produce useful information of intelligence value, if not direct investigative value. Of course, standard auto theft investigations targeted at chop shops, salvage yards, etc. are also employed.

**Crime prevention.** The task force also utilizes crime prevention and problem solving approaches. They make presentations before groups and through the media, sponsor public service announcements, and operate fraud and auto theft hotlines. They have also worked with problem locations to attempt to make them less susceptible to auto theft.

### Program Effects

The auto theft problem in El Paso County has declined since the late 1980s and early 1990s. Annual auto theft totals that were once around 5,500 now typically hover around 4,000, better than a 25% reduction. Finding a way to further reduce the still high incidence of auto theft may be more difficult, however.



The increased attention given by the task force to border checks and investigative tactics since mid-1997 may be paying off through increased vehicle recoveries by the task force itself. The task force averaged about 12 recoveries per month during the 1995 project year, almost 15 per month in 1996, and then increased to about 36 per month during the first nine months of the 1997 project year. Looked at another way, the task force's stolen vehicle recoveries as a percentage of all recoveries in the county increased over this period from 7.7% to 9.9% to 22.0%. Available figures indicate that the clearance rate for auto thefts has also been gradually improving. It will be interesting to see whether these recent improvements will lead to further reductions in the incidence of auto theft.

### Critical Factors

The critical factor affecting El Paso's auto theft problem is clearly the proximity to the Mexican border, and the critical factor supporting the department's extensive efforts is the continued grant funding from the Auto Theft Prevention Authority. The situation in El Paso provides a good lesson about how specific crime problems, their characteristics, and their causes can vary dramatically depending upon local circumstances. The one type of development that could probably significantly improve the situation would be more effective cooperation and assistance from the Mexican authorities.

## Youth Firearms Violence Initiative San Antonio, Texas

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### Program Summary

The San Antonio Police Department adopted an enforcement strategy targeted at gangs and guns with COPS Office funding under the Youth Firearms Violence Initiative (YFVI). The department adopted five specific enforcement tactics as well as an effort to improve information-sharing between the police department and emergency trauma centers. Emphasizing search warrants proved to be the most effective enforcement tactic, while bar checks were least effective.

### Site Description

San Antonio is the second largest city in Texas and the nation's 10th largest city, with an estimated 1997 population of 1,115,600. It is also a city with a large geographic area—389 square miles. The police department has 1,961 sworn positions and almost 400 nonsworn, and investigated 83,571 Part I offenses in 1997. The department is organized into four main divisions—Investigations, Uniform, Support Services, and Human Resources.

### Program Description

The San Antonio Police Department was selected to participate in the national YFVI program in August 1995 and had its plan approved in October 1995. The actual program was implemented in November 1995 and ran through December 1996, when grant funds were largely exhausted. Several YFVI components and tactics have been continued, however, based on their demonstrated usefulness.

San Antonio was selected to participate in the YFVI program, at least in part, because of its significant gang- and gun-related problems. As of 1994, the police department counted 137 gangs or subsets of gangs in the city, with 5,485 known members or associates. A

total of 1,262 drive-by shootings were recorded in 1993, the first year that such statistics were maintained, resulting in 14 homicides, 35 attempted murders, and 513 aggravated assaults. Juvenile arrests for violent crimes had increased four-fold between 1987 and 1994, and those for unlawfully carry weapons had tripled.

The primary enforcement mechanism for San Antonio's YFVI program was the WRAT (Weapons Recovery and Tracking) Task Force. WRAT was not a permanent unit but rather an overtime assignment. Each day or night (depending on the tactic being implemented), a group of officers would assemble and carry out the assigned tactic in the assigned target area. Since it was an overtime assignment, WRAT officers differed from day to day. Some degree of continuity was achieved, however, through four mechanisms: (1) WRAT was commanded throughout the project by the same special operations lieutenant; (2) specific guidelines and directions were provided daily; (3) supervision, also funded by overtime pay, was provided by a fairly small group of sergeants; and (4) although several hundred officers eventually participated in WRAT, a much smaller number who were found to be the most productive were used most frequently.

Initially, the WRAT Task Force was deployed city-wide, targeting "gun hot spots" chosen daily. Starting in March 1996, however, the task force was given four target areas, chosen on the basis of analysis of firearms-related crime in the city. These target areas were maintained through December 1996, although each was expanded somewhat in June 1996 based on further analysis and some apparent shifting of incidents, possibly due to displacement.

The San Antonio YFVI utilized four regular WRAT tactics—directed patrol, saturation patrol, bar checks, and knock and talk—plus the use of search warrants whenever available. These four tactics plus search warrants were largely maintained throughout the project period, except that bar checks were eventually discontinued when they were found to be ineffective. The four tactics were generally implemented on a four-week rotating basis during the project period starting March 1996, although the knock and talk tactic was used less often than the others. The use of search warrants and the four tactics are described below, along with two ancillary efforts that were also employed, gun tracing and a police/hospital information network.

**Search warrants.** The search warrant tactic was employed opportunistically. Whenever an officer assigned to WRAT overtime duties developed probable cause to support the issuance of a search warrant for a firearms-related offense, whether within a target area or not, the warrant would be obtained and served by WRAT officers. Over the course of the project, 90 search warrants were served, or an average of 6.5 per month.

These search warrants were almost always obtained based on information from confidential informants. Unfortunately, the expenditure of YFVI funds to pay informants was not allowed by the COPS Office, so these funds were required to come from other sources. Interviews indicated that there were some occasions when informant information could not be obtained because money was not available to pay for it, but that these occasions were infrequent.

Search warrants were almost always based on drug-related information. Typically, informants provided information that drugs were being sold or stored at a location, and that firearms were also present. Sometimes the informant reported that the drug seller carried a handgun on his or her person, but more often it was reported that firearms had been seen on the premises.

The search warrants were almost always for residences, usually in low income neighborhoods. Project officials believed that gang members generally stored their weapons in homes, thus this tactic was favored because it provided access to the places where firearms were expected to be found. In fact, WRAT search warrants averaged one firearm seized per warrant, lending some validity to this expectation. In many instances, though, small quantities of drugs were found but no firearms. On several occasions, however, this tactic netted large numbers of firearms, possibly indicating that a gang's armory had been discovered.

The search warrant approach proved to be much more cost-efficient than any of the four regular WRAT tactics, from the standpoint of firearms seized per dollar expended. This, however, is a somewhat unfair comparison since search warrants were employed opportunistically whereas the four tactics were deployed routinely. That is, the search warrant technique was utilized only when there was already probable cause to believe that contraband such as illegal firearms could

be found at a specific location. By contrast, the other tactics were deployed routinely based on more general information about less precise targets. Thus, one would expect a much higher rate of "hits" from search warrants than from directed patrol, saturation patrol, bar checks, or knock and talk. Looked at another way, it is not certain that a greater investment in the use of search warrants would have added any additional productivity, since WRAT officers essentially took advantage of every search warrant opportunity that came to their attention (except on a few occasions when informant funds were not available).

**Directed patrol.** The WRAT directed patrol tactic usually involved deploying four patrol officers, four detectives, and one sergeant as a team from 4:00 p.m. to midnight, Tuesday through Saturday nights. This tactic was based heavily on Target Sheets provided by the Youth Crime Detail. These sheets identified specific addresses, individuals, and/or vehicles suspected of being tied to youth firearms-related offenses. WRAT officers used this information as much as possible to target their efforts, employing both uniformed and plainclothes techniques.

The directed patrol tactic produced more firearms seized (92) than any of the other three regular tactics, but it was also the most frequently utilized tactic overall. From a cost-efficiency standpoint, the directed patrol tactic produced somewhat fewer firearms seized per dollar expended than the saturation patrol tactic.

**Saturation patrol.** The WRAT saturation patrol tactic utilized ten patrol officers and one sergeant per evening, working from 4:00 p.m. until midnight, usually Tuesday through Sunday. Officers were deployed in pairs, rather than as a team, and were often spread among the various target areas. They were provided target-related information by the Youth Crime Detail, but generally concentrated on car stops and person checks. Saturation patrol was the second most frequently used WRAT tactic and was the most cost-efficient of the four regular tactics, from the perspective of firearms seized.

**Bar checks.** The WRAT bar check tactic was the most labor-intensive of the tactics, employing two sergeants, 10 detectives and 12 patrol officers, in one or two teams, each night that it was utilized. These bar checks

were conducted between 7:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. Bars were selected based on information from the Vice Unit as well as the Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission. Generally, plainclothes officers would enter the bars first to observe violations of penal or regulatory statutes, after which one or both teams would enter and conduct a thorough check of the premises and patrons. The heavy manpower investment was necessary due to the very large crowds attracted by many of the bars.

This tactic did not prove to be very effective. Few guns were seized (10 in total), and many of these were discovered in nearby parked vehicles rather than in the bars. A number of arrests for drugs, minors in possession of alcohol, and similar offenses were made, but overall productivity was low and bar checks had the worst cost-efficiency by far for firearms seized per dollar expended. Also, many of the bars that were targeted had an older clientele, making it unlikely that youthful offenders would be encountered. For these reasons, the use of this tactic was discontinued in June 1996.

**Knock and talk.** The WRAT knock and talk tactic was modeled after a program initiated in St. Louis. Two community policing officers and a sergeant would visit the homes of suspected youth gang members during the daytime (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.), Monday through Friday, and request parental consent to search the youths' rooms for illegal firearms, with an offer of immunity if weapons or other contraband were found. The officers would also provide referral and other types of information to the residents. Targeted homes were identified based on information obtained from the Youth Crime Detail and other officers.

This tactic was used substantially less and was less costly than the other WRAT tactics for three reasons: (1) it was started later in the project period than the other three, as legal concerns had to be addressed; (2) it was not practical to employ the tactic during the summer months when youths were home from school; and (3) it only utilized three personnel at a time, compared to nine for directed patrol, 11 for saturation patrol, and 24 for bar checks.

This tactic proved to be feasible but difficult to implement, and not terribly productive. Of approximately 1,000 locations visited, less than 400 bona fide consent

searches of valid gang member addresses were conducted (over 150 additional consent searches were permitted even though the targeted youth did not live at the address). This gap was accounted for by nobody being home, invalid addresses, suspects who had moved, and refusals (the latter only occurred 71 times). Only seven firearms were seized as a result of these searches, but it should also be noted that no complaints were generated against the officers involved or the department.

From a cost-efficiency perspective, this tactic was less productive at generating firearms seizures than any of the other tactics except bar checks.

**Gun tracing.** As part of the YFVI effort, although not a grant-funded activity, the department had detectives attempt to trace each of the 254 firearms seized by WRAT officers. This involved submitting information on each firearm to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF), and then following up on the information received back, if appropriate. This proved to be a cumbersome, time consuming, and unproductive process. Information was slow in returning from the BATF, and most of the guns could not be fully traced from the original purchase to the person from whom it was seized. Despite all the effort devoted to it, the WRAT gun tracing effort did not result in any additional charges being filed.

**Police/Hospital network.** As part of YFVI, a system was implemented in July 1996 in San Antonio with the city's three main trauma centers called the "Cops and Docs" Firearm Injury Notification System. The purpose of the system is to avoid the situation in which an individual with a gunshot wound gets treated and released by medical personnel without the police department ever being notified. Some cities have found that 10-20% of all shootings "fall through the cracks" because of this problem.

The Cops and Docs system uses dedicated fax machines to make two types of notifications: (1) hospital emergency room personnel complete a simple Firearm Injury Notification form whenever they encounter a gunshot patient and fax it to the police department's communications center, so that the police department can verify that the case has been reported; and (2) the police department faxes a Be On the Look Out (BOLO)

for Possible Shooting Victim form to hospital emergency rooms whenever they know of such an event but have not been able to locate the wounded person.

Through the end of 1996, the police department had received 49 notifications from emergency rooms, and disseminated three BOLOs. As it turned out, none of the 49 notifications were unknown to the police department—thus, the Cops and Docs program did not lead to the discovery of any unreported firearms offenses during the project period—nor did any of the BOLOs contribute to finding any shooting victims.

### Program Effects

WRAT officers seized 254 firearms during the course of the 14-month YFVI project, representing about 17% of all the firearms seized by the department during that period. Table 1 summarizes the firearm recovery productivity of the project's four regular WRAT tactics plus search warrants. As discussed above, the apparent cost-efficiency advantage of the search warrant tactic is somewhat deceiving, since it was an opportunistic tactic rather than one that was regularly and routinely deployed.

**Table 1. Firearm Recovery Productivity of WRAT Tactics**

Tactic	Firearms Seized	Total Cost of Tactic	Cost Per Firearm Seized
Search Warrants	93	\$28,043	\$302
Saturation Patrol	52	\$151,731	\$2,918
Directed Patrol	92	\$339,198	\$3,687
Knock & Talk	7	\$37,703	\$5,386
Bar Checks	10	\$142,754	\$14,275
Overall	254	\$699,429	\$2,754

Other indicators of WRAT officer productivity are presented in Table 2. As can be seen, WRAT officers made over 2,000 arrests, about half on warrants and half warrantless, issued over 3,000 citations, and conducted over 1,000 field interviews. Youths age 23 or younger, the official targets of San Antonio's YFVI program, represented about 36% of warrant arrests and 45% of warrantless arrests.

**Table 2. Other Indicators of WRAT Officer Productivity**

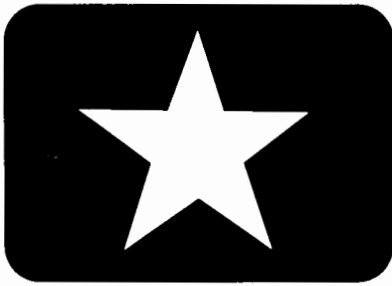
Indicators	N
Warrantless Arrests	
Felony (adult)	147
Felony (youth)	87
Misdemeanor (adult)	485
Misdemeanor (youth)	390
Curfew Violations	39
Warrant Arrests	
Felony (adult)	32
Felony (youth)	41
Misdemeanor (adult)	609
Misdemeanor (youth)	312
Citations	
Hazardous	849
Non-Hazardous	2,227
Other Activities	
Field Interview Sheets	1,104
Gang Data Sheets	251

Analysis of crime and call for service data in order to evaluate the overall effectiveness of San Antonio's YFVI program is not yet complete. This evaluation is being conducted by Abt Associates as part of the national evaluation of all 10 YFVI programs. Results of that evaluation should be available in 1998.

### Critical Factors

The most critical factor in the case of the San Antonio YFVI program was the availability of substantial COPS Office funds for police officer overtime. This allowed the police department to deploy significant resources targeted specifically at gang- and gun-related problems involving youth. The funding allowed the WRAT Task Force to utilize several tactics already in the police department's repertoire (search warrants, directed patrol, saturation patrol) but to focus them for the first time on these particular target groups and behaviors. The funding also encouraged the adoption of two other enforcement tactics (bar checks and knock and talk) and two ancillary efforts (gun tracing and Cops and Docs).

Although the grant funding expired in December 1996, the department has continued to utilize all of the tactics except for bar checks, and it has retained the YFVI focus on gang- and gun-related problems. Extensive overtime assignments are no longer available, of course, so the tactics have been absorbed by regular units, such as the Street Crime Attack Team (SCAT) and the Youth Crime Detail. The Cops and Docs system is also still in place and being utilized, since it does not entail any significant ongoing cost and since it encourages closer cooperation between the police department and trauma centers.



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