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SHOCAP

Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program



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IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

for the

**SERIOUS HABITUAL OFFENDER
COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PROGRAM (SHOCAP)
(Grant #89-JS-CX-K001)**

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IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT FOR
THE SERIOUS HABITUAL OFFENDER
COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PROGRAM (SHOCAP)
TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

The numbers and types of offenses for which serious habitual juvenile offenders are responsible are well documented in research literature. Serious habitual juvenile offenders, who account for about six to eight percent of the juvenile population, have been found to be responsible for over 60 percent of the serious crimes committed by juveniles. While few presume that criminal behavior can be predicted, there are behavioral "flags" that can be used to identify serious habitual offenders (SHO's). These offenders establish a pattern of behavior that makes crime a major element of their life-styles as adults. Yet the criminal justice system addresses crime as a problem caused mostly by adults rather than a problem that begins with the criminal careers of juveniles.

The informal nature of the juvenile justice system, which was developed as a means to divert juveniles from the adult justice system, is not well suited to dealing with SHO's who commit large numbers of serious criminal offenses. The absence of a systemwide case management process for these offenders has led to a situation in which SHO's drop between the cracks that exist among agencies that deal with these offenders. SHO's are, in many jurisdictions, recycled through the system until they become adults. Workable solutions to juvenile crime are more difficult to find in the literature than is evidence of the importance of dealing with SHO's. Research points to some programs that seem to work for some young people under some conditions. Few programs deal only with SHO's who are viewed as the "worst of the worst" offenders. There is little evidence that transferring SHO's to the adult system is a viable alternative to the juvenile justice system. In most cases, juveniles transferred to adult court receive less attention and confinement time than they would have received as the result of going to juvenile court.

Current System Response

The informality of the juvenile justice system, which serves first offenders, status offenders, and troubled youth, has created an uncoordinated approach for dealing with serious habitual offenders. Discretion is exercised at a variety of decision points in the system without the benefit of a thorough picture of the behavior of a serious juvenile offender. Just some of those options are described here.

- Police officers can informally handle juvenile cases by turning offenders over to parents, by making a referral to a community program, or by forwarding a case into the juvenile justice system.

- School officials can informally handle incidents through individual counseling, by turning problems over to parents, by making a referral to a community program, or by forwarding a case to the juvenile justice intake agencies, including the police.
- Officials responsible for intake of juveniles into the court system can counsel and release offenders, make referrals to other agencies, provide informal supervision, or detain juveniles pending court proceedings.
- Prosecutors can also informally handle cases, make referrals, dismiss charges, or bring cases to court; judges can send juveniles to diversion programs, place them on probation, release them, or send them to institutions.
- Probation and corrections agencies must decide upon the most appropriate level of custody and type of program in which to place a juvenile offender. Both agencies must also determine the best approach for supervising an offender who is released into the community.

In many jurisdictions, the different agencies responsible for these decisions do not work together or share information about the same juvenile and his or her family. Police and school officials can witness a juvenile breaking conditions of probation but may not know it because those conditions which are not effectively communicated to the staffs of these agencies. Judges make decisions in juvenile cases based upon fragmentary information because police, schools, and probation agencies do not share information.

For SHO's, these breakdowns in the system represent opportunities to commit a large number of offenses with impunity. SHO's rarely get special treatment. In many jurisdictions, the problems of SHO's are passed on to the adult system in which juvenile offenders get a fresh start at accumulating a lengthy new criminal history. For SHO's, the juvenile justice system lacks credibility. In most cases, the system does not focus resources on SHO's in any special way so as to have some effect on their criminal behavior. Many SHO's are themselves victims of abuse and neglect and need specialized counseling and other services. There is a vital need for a new approach to dealing with SHO's that takes into account their status as victims as well as perpetrators. Overall, the current system in place in most jurisdictions system serves neither the public nor SHO's very well.

The Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive
Action Program (SHOCAP)

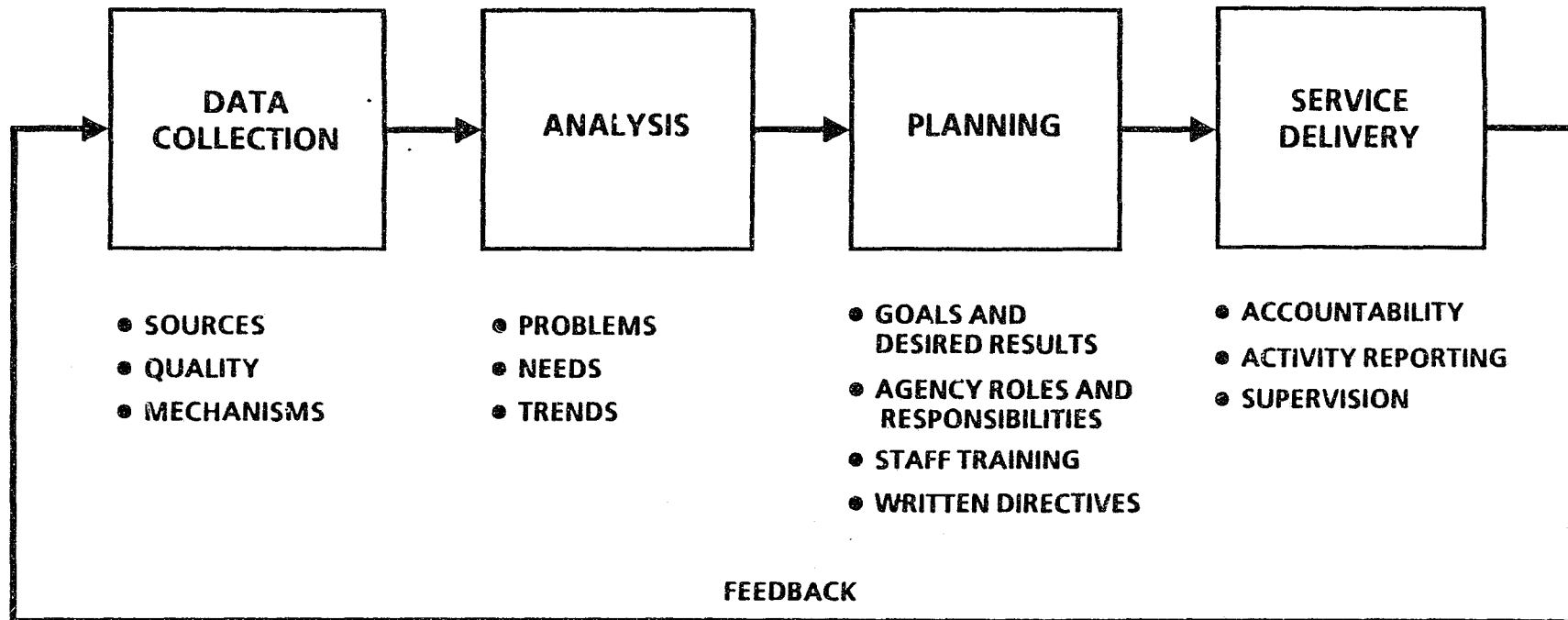
SHOCAP is an interagency case management system designed to enable juvenile justice agencies, schools, and human service agencies to make more informed decisions regarding a small number of offenders who repeatedly commit serious crimes. The program relies upon interagency cooperation as a means to promote sharing of relevant information about SHO's. SHOCAP operates on the premise that, in most cases, enough resources are available within the juvenile justice system to deal with SHO's. Police officers, teachers, and social workers come in contact with SHO's on a daily basis. Coordinated efforts among agencies makes these contacts part of a credible system of community based supervision. Formal interagency cooperation and information sharing will lead to changes in the allocation of existing resources so that they can be focused on SHO's and their families. In terms of the social and economic costs of crime, dealing with SHO's should be the highest priority for any juvenile service agency.

Using the term "program" in describing SHOCAP is not entirely correct. SHOCAP relies upon a systematic approach to management that calls for agencies to establish a process for doing business that relies upon information and constant monitoring of results. The key elements of this systematic process which are depicted in Figure 1 are: data collection examines the sources of information used for making decisions and the quality of that information and the mechanisms needed to gather it; analysis of the identification of service needs, prioritization of those needs, and detection of trends over time; planning to establish goals and objectives, defining roles and responsibilities, training staff, and establishing written policies and procedures; service delivery culminates the process through which practices are now improved service delivery. This is accomplished through accountability supervision and activity reporting systems; and feedback is obtained through formal methods to determine program processes are in place and to the degree goals and objectives are being met.

Each of these steps must be performed if management is to operate using a systematic process of decision making SHOCAP calls for each agency in the juvenile justice system and other agencies that deal with SHO's to use this process to work together to implement SHOCAP.

Figure 1

SYSTEMATIC MANAGEMENT PROCESS



Program Progress

The SHOCAP Training and Technical Assistance Project was awarded to Public Administration Service (PAS) in August of 1986 as a means to provide assistance to agencies interested in implementing SHOCAP. Rather than providing agencies with grants, the scope of work called for PAS to market SHOCAP on a nationwide basis to identify jurisdictions committed to changing their approaches for dealing with SHO's. Some of the agencies expressing interest in the program would then be selected to receive training and technical assistance to be developed and delivered by PAS with assistance from practitioner consultants.

Marketing Efforts

A series of steps were taken to find jurisdictions interested in and capable of implementing SHOCAP. The first step was to design a brochure that explained SHOCAP and the types of assistance available to agencies participating in the technical assistance and training project. After the brochure was completed, other marketing tasks were performed.

- A comprehensive mailing list was developed.
- A newsletter article on SHOCAP was prepared and distributed to criminal justice, juvenile justice, and governmental professional associations.
- A promotional presentation was developed and delivered to such groups as the National Sheriffs' Association and OJJDP's State Advisory Groups.

Promotional materials were distributed to representatives from each element of local government to include police chiefs, city managers, mayors, juvenile judges, prosecutors, school administrators, and corrections officials.

The result of these efforts was the identification of a pool of approximately 300 officials from over 164 agencies with an interest in SHOCAP. Eighty-eight jurisdictions began the process of applying to receive on-site training and technical assistance.

Site Selection

Each of the 88 agencies interested in the program was sent a Self-Assessment Questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to require a lead

agency to gather documents from other agencies in the juvenile justice system as well as from schools and human service agencies. These documents, along with some answers to basic juvenile procedure questions, provided the basis for the first screening of applications. Some agencies did not complete the questionnaire and chose to remain Affiliate Sites. As affiliates, they have access to the Serious Habitual Offender Information Clearinghouse established under this contract at the National Crime Prevention Institute (NCPI) at the University of Louisville. Affiliates also receive Technical Assistance Bulletins by mail and are provided seats in specialized training sessions based upon availability.

Once the Self-Assessment Questionnaire for a site was submitted and reviewed, sites were selected that appeared to hold the most promise for implementing the program. In some cases, sites were ruled out for geographic reasons. For those sites selected for further consideration, a Site Assessment Team was assigned to make a three- to five-day site visit to complete a Site Assessment Survey. That on-site assessment was designed to:

- Answer questions that emerged during the review of the completed Self Assessment Questionnaire.
- Collect more information regarding the handling of offenders in that jurisdiction.
- Explain SHOCAP to administrators of key agencies and assess their commitment to the project.
- Leave behind a planning guide for use in preparing for the training session.

Based upon the Site Assessment Survey and reports from site assessors, decisions were made either to deliver the SHOCAP training program at a site or delay training until a site was adequately prepared to make the most of the training session.

At this time, 18 jurisdictions have been identified as project sites. Two additional agencies may be selected from the remaining eligible jurisdictions. Current project sites include:

Knoxville and Knox County, Tennessee

Prince William County, Virginia

Anne Arundel County, Maryland

Rapid City and Pennington County, South Dakota

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Palm Beach County, Florida
Hillsborough County and Tampa, Florida
Rocky Mount, North Carolina
Boise, Idaho
Bellingham, Washington
Pima County, Arizona
El Paso, Texas (City and County)
Riverside, California
Pomona, California
Omaha, Nebraska
Toledo, Ohio
Bartlesville, Oklahoma
Kokomo, Indiana

These sites, added to three of the original project sites-- Jacksonville, Florida; Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Oxnard, California, provide the current base of 21 agencies involved in various stages of SHOCAP.

SHOCAP Training

The five-day SHOCAP training session is designed to promote interagency team building, explain the elements of the program, and to assist attendees in developing an Implementation Plan for approval by the chief administrative officers of agencies participating in SHOCAP. Each module of the training session has a series of instructional goals that are supported with detailed training materials, video tape, and overhead transparencies. A great deal of emphasis is placed on group exercises that promote individual participation and group consensus.

A training team of up to five instructors is sent to each site. At least one of those instructors participated in the Site Assessment. A summary is prepared for trainers containing relevant information surrounding problems and issues that are important at each site. The training sessions are usually held in a local hotel or conference facility, with the cost paid by SHOCAP. After Action Reports filed with OJJDP support the conclusion that these

sessions have successfully launched SHOCAP sites by strengthening interagency working relationships and establishing a common plan of action.

Technical Assistance

Three of the original Demonstration Sites, Oxnard, Colorado Springs, and Jacksonville were selected to serve as Technical Assistance (TA) Host Sites. As Host Sites, these jurisdictions entered into cost-reimbursement subcontracts with PAS to: conduct advanced project development activities; provide technical assistance and training services to SHOCAP sites; promote the expansion of SHOCAP in their region and state; host specialized training sessions; and to develop legislative packages designed to make a case for necessary revisions in state laws regarding SHO's.

Training programs on crime analysis were delivered at each of the three TA Host Sites. Staff from the Host Sites served as trainers for each of these sessions, along with staff from PAS who developed the course materials.

Other technical assistance was provided to SHOCAP sites through on-site assistance, written materials, specialized training, and site visits to other project locations.

Written Materials

The focal point for the collection, development, and distribution of written materials regarding SHOCAP is the Serious Habitual Offender Information Clearinghouse operated by the National Crime Prevention Institute at the University of Louisville. The Clearinghouse, funded through a subcontract with PAS, serves as a repository for information on program strategies and research literature related to SHO's. The Clearinghouse maintains an automated index of these materials along with an automated mailing list for distribution of materials. Project sites and affiliates can reach the Clearinghouse through a nationwide toll-free telephone number. Guidebooks were written specifically for the agencies participating in the SHOCAP process: probation, schools, prosecution, intake, detention, courts, social services, police, state corrections, and parole/aftercare.

The Future of SHOCAP

The immediate future activities of the SHOCAP program will place emphasis on providing technical assistance to current project sites. These activities will include on-site follow-up assessments of the 18 sites to determine progress and needs, training and integration of voluntarism into the SHOCAP process, development of a SHOCAP correspondence course for use by

affiliate sites, promotion of state legislative changes, strengthening the corrections component of SHOCAP, and providing ongoing case management assistance. The corrections component will be designed to improve continuity among agencies in planning for the re-entry of SHO's into the community. Video cassettes addressing topics related to SHOCAP will be available to sites upon request to promote understanding and interest in the program.

During the remainder of 1989, topics for specialized training will be identified through a training needs assessment, and course materials will be developed. The courses will be conducted and evaluated from beginning early in 1990.

Marketing activities and pre-training assessment for additional SHOCAP sites will begin in late 1989. It is anticipated that six new sites will be chosen, and training will begin in the spring of 1990. By this time, the current 18 sites will have produced experienced SHOCAP coordinators to expand the pool of practitioner consultants available for training and technical assistance. A training course for potential trainers will be designed and conducted prior to the commencement of SHOCAP implementation training.

In the months and years ahead, an effort will be made to market SHOCAP in a way that promotes fundamental change in the relationships among agencies that deal with youth. The hoped for result is to create a juvenile service/justice system that functions cooperatively in serving the best interests of young people and the community in which they live.