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IOTA DIAGNOSIS

PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA -

36957

NCJRS

INTRODUCTION

OCT 18 1976

The IOTA Portsmouth Community Profile and Criminal Justice System Study contains descriptions of the Portsmouth governmental structure, community characteristics, and CJS component structures, processes and interrelationships. This document provides basic information about the community and the CJS necessary to facilitate the identification of problem areas, needs assessments and the consideration of possible alternatives to implement ameliorative measures for a more effective CJS.

The diagnosis contained herein presents identified problems as perceived by local government and CJS personnel and assessments of problem situations by the LEAA Assistance Team. No attempt has been made here to devise complicated solutions to major identified problems. Appropriate solutions can only be derived from in-depth analysis of current situations and projection of future developments. Instead, the contents of the report, coupled with this diagnosis, provide information essential to the establishment of a dynamic community and government mechanism to:

- Facilitate implementation of immediate, short range measures to improve simple problems.
- Further analyze and diagnose CJS problems requiring long range planning, implementation and evaluation.

- Develop and implement concrete, realistic steps to eliminate major problems and to utilize opportunities for development of innovative projects with integrated government and community resources.

The IOTA Policy Guidance Committee (PGC) has endorsed the approach reflected in this diagnosis for the following reasons:

- Insufficient data currently exists throughout the Portsmouth CJS to satisfy the requirements for "hard-core" systems analysis, program planning and implementation. The efforts to the Assistance Team resulted in an essential descriptive document on the Portsmouth CJS and community. However, due to the lack of sufficient documentation in many areas, considerably more information gathering and documentation is necessary to completely reflect the overall scope of the CJS, its interrelationships and problems.
- In order to benefit from the IOTA report, the current PGC must expand its scope to ensure the participation of all organizations and individuals comprising and interacting with the CJS. This mechanism must be solidified with definite processes instituted to effectively utilize the IOTA report and their own subsequent documentation.

This diagnosis, then, contains information which puts the contents of the IOTA report in a comprehensible context, identifies significant findings, indicates the problems perceived by Portsmouth representatives, and suggests some considerations to address problem areas.

### Major Findings

Several significant circumstances were revealed during the study.

They are:

#### Crime Situation

- The City of Portsmouth experiences a high rate of crime when compared to other geographical areas, including cities of similar size, the Norfolk-Portsmouth SMSA, the State of Virginia, the South Atlantic Region and the entire United States.
- Portsmouth crime rates, though generally high, are particularly higher than other areas in crimes against persons, i.e., assault, rape and homicide.
- While the crime rates are generally high, there appears to be a reduction in crime rates for Black youths in the city.
- The high crime rates in Portsmouth are accompanied by clearance rates which are lower than in other geographic areas.

#### Economy

- The Portsmouth economy is hampered by geographical limitations which prohibit the development of job-producing businesses.
- The Portsmouth populace contains a large pool of unskilled persons which contribute to the unemployed ranks and are a potential crime-producing subgroup.

### Criminal Justice System

- The Portsmouth Criminal Justice System operates with varying degrees of cohesiveness and separation; therefore, from a total CJS perspective, some processes are substantially more adequate and effective in controlling and preventing crime than others.
- Some Portsmouth CJS components have implemented measures which have enhanced their individual effectiveness and will eventually lead to a smoother operating and more effective system.
- Current and planned activities in the Portsmouth CJS have been designed to facilitate a combined government and community effort to control, reduce and prevent crime.
- Various components of the CJS have solicited community involvement in their efforts to improve services and have attempted themselves to educate the community regarding their roles, functions and services.

## IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS AND ACTION CONSIDERATIONS

This section contains those problems perceived by the local representatives participating in IOTA. They are listed separately for each CJS component and referenced with the page number of the IOTA report containing relevant information. It must be noted that this listing resulted from information reported to the Assistance Team by local representatives. Thus, a validation process (which will be performed by the expanded PGC during its first workshop in mid-March) is necessary to further clarify, analyze and measure the problems identified. The problems identified for each component are presented in the following categories:

- Systematic Problems. These are problems which affect interrelationships between CJS agencies, non-CJS organizations and/or the community.
- Internal Problems. These are problems which are perceived to have impact only within a particular CJS component.

Further measurement and analysis may eventually alter such categorization. However, the current listing provides a basis for instituting the processes necessary to maintain a continuous local effort consistent with IOTA goals and essential to Portsmouth's efforts to create a more efficacious CJS.



Portsmouth Police Department - Systemic Problems

Page 5-8:

- The Chief feels that an adult offender tracking system is needed from time of arrest through adjudication.
- The PPD has had a history of isolation from other CJS components and the community which has hampered the exchange of ideas essential for more effective PPD operation.
- The Chief feels that every area and function of the Department's operations is currently below desirable professional standards.

Page 5-55:

- The Commander of the Uniform Patrol Division states that there is insufficient rapport between the officers and the Commonwealth Attorney's Office.
- He also feels that there is inadequate counseling of officers regarding legal requirements by the judiciary.
- He further indicated the court's propensity to grant continuances to defendants exceeded similar consideration to police officers.

Page 5-91:

- The Commander of the Plain Clothes Division indicated that the current communication network using civil defense dispatchers was inadequate.
- He also feels that the educational level of officers is a problem within the Department. However, there is conflict between the PPD and the Civil Service Commission about educational requirements.

Page 5-96:

- Communication between the Youth Bureau and the community is poor, although no reasons for this problem are currently evident.

Page 5-117:

- Relationships between the Vice Squad and the Commonwealth's Attorney were reputedly bad with little existing communication.
- Relationships between the courts and the Vice Squad are also strained, due to the officers' feelings that the courts are too lenient and recommend probation rather than incarceration too frequently.

Page 5-126:

- The supervisor of the Narcotics Unit feels that the Commonwealth's Attorney provides insufficient training to officers in current laws affecting effective arrest and case preparation.

Page 5-131:

- Although the Commonwealth's Attorney has assigned an assistant to the HIT unit, their relationship is ineffectuated by the constant turnover of attorneys.



Portsmouth Police Department - Internal Problems

Page 5-11:

- At this time, no written guidelines have been established defining the role of the Assistant Chief.
- Training programs are inadequate throughout the PPD.

Page 5-18:

- Older officers resent having their conduct and practices questioned by the Internal Affairs Unit.

Page 5-19:

- The Internal Affairs Unit staff is currently insufficient to meet the increase in complaints from the citizenry.
- The sharing of clerical staff between the Internal Affairs Unit and other PPD units compromises the confidentiality of information processed by the Unit.

Page 5-20:

- Since the Internal Affairs Unit is new, time will be required before the Unit gains the acceptance and confidence of the officers.

Page 5-24:

- The Applicant Screening Officer needs training in administrative, management and investigative techniques.

Page 5-33:

- The staff of the Planning and Analysis Unit are as yet inadequately trained to perform their new roles in the Department.

- The data collection efforts of the Planning and Analysis Unit are stymied by inadequate documentation of data from the other units.
- The implementation of a new task force concept of planning and analysis has been retarded by the inexperience of officers to function in a group planning mode.

Page 5-41:

- Poor communication exists between the Police Community Relations Unit and other officers. Many officers have been reluctant to accept the value of the Unit.

Page 5-46:

- The Fiscal Office suffers from an insufficient staff complement which is also inadequately trained.

Page 5-48:

- No training exists for the Public Information Officer.

Page 5-52:

- Interdepartmental communication between the Public Information Officer and other units is weak.
- At present, the Public Information Officer has no designated back-up and no secretarial support.

Page 5-55:

- Morale among officers in the Uniform Patrol Division is low due to inadequate working conditions and insufficient equipment.
- The Uniformed Patrol needs improved cars and a better radio communications network.

Page 5-56:

- The Uniformed Patrol Division suffers from lack of manpower and inadequately defined lines of authority between units.

Page 5-60:

- The supervisor of the K-9 Corps feels he could utilize dogs trained in narcotics and bomb detection.
- He also stated that the current staff complement needs to be increased from eight to 20 officers to allow full coverage of the city.

Page 5-62:

- Officers in other units are not knowledgeable of the circumstances under which the K-9 Corps can be most effectively utilized.

Page 5-66:

- The Captain of the Watch indicated a manpower shortage both for officers and clerical support. Additional officers would eliminate the use of one-man patrols.
- He further feels that the requirement of officers for Portsmouth residency has reduced the volume of available manpower.

Page 5-68:

- The Training Officer states that there are no facilities for counseling officers.

Page 5-78:

- There is insufficient storage space for property and evidence.

Page 5-81:

- The Game Warden reports that the PPD needs its own animal pound and a staff veterinarian.

Page 5-82:

- The Game Warden feels that his officers are not properly uniformed and equipped. They have no portable radios, need firearms and training in their usage and need training in arrest techniques.

Page 5-87:

- The Plain Clothes Division has no formal training program. It is felt that training has been provided based on favoritism rather than a formal selection process.
- There is no guarantee that the receipt of specific training will result in placement where such training can be utilized.

Page 5-90:

- The Commander of the Plain Clothes Division feels that continuing education should be a requirement for increased rank.

Page 5-95:

- The Youth Bureau experiences difficulties in maintaining open communication with the Detective Division.

Page 5-97:

- The Youth Bureau caseloads are too large and compromise thoroughness of investigations.

Page 5-99:

- The Detective Division suffers from lack of training.

Page 5-104:

- The captain in charge of the Detective Division feels that some officers not working to full potential.

Page 5-106:

- The Central Files Division suffers from lack of training.

Page 5-107:

- Officers are often assigned to Central Files with little or no experience in the functions they must fulfill.

Page 5-111:

- Central Files Division could operate more effectively within its current physical plant, if additional manpower were available.
- Officers in other units want unlimited access to the Central Files. The commanding officer of Central Files disagrees with this practice since it would create a records management problem. Thus, there is some friction between Central Files and some officers.
- Controls and guidelines are needed to define and formalize procedures used by PPD units to obtain services of Central Files.

Page 5-112:

- Human errors in recordkeeping are frequent due to lack of training of officers and bulk of caseloads and paper-work, often resulting in incomplete files.

Page 5-113:

- The commanding officer of Central Files believes that the unit's staff are weak in personnel pride, esteem and cohesiveness.

Page 5-117:

- Relations between the Vice Squad and other units are strained due to a lack of understanding of officers outside the unit concerning Vice Squad officers' apparent aloofness while working in the field.
- Vice Squad operations are hampered because of new and inexperienced staff, lack of training and poor communication within the PPD.
- The current radio communications system compromises confidentiality required for vice operations.
- A separate radio channel is needed which does not pass through the civil defense dispatcher.

Page 5-122:

- Officers are assigned to the Narcotics Unit without specialized training.

Page 5-126:

- The Narcotics Unit also suffers from lack of equipment, insufficient manpower, and inadequate funds to utilize in making cases against large-scale traffickers.

Page 5-131:

- The exchange of information between the HIT unit and other PPD units is not as free as expected, although they are improving.

Page 5-138:

- The Auxiliary needs training commensurate with that provided regular officers.



Commonwealth's Attorney - Systemic Problems

Page 6-4:

- Grand Jury hearings are used as a case screening mechanism rather than preliminary hearings because:
  - There is insufficient time for Commonwealth Attorneys to confer with witnesses.
  - There is insufficient time for Commonwealth Attorneys to research results of recent court decisions.
  - Commonwealth Attorneys are often inexperienced in case preparation techniques.

Page 6-6:

- Misdemeanors are handled in the lower courts with no pretrial preparation by the Commonwealth Attorneys.
- Most misdemeanor cases are negotiated outside of court to minimize docket time.

Page 6-9:

- Relations between the Commonwealth Attorney's Office and the Probation and Parole Department are strained because of the length of time required by Probation and Parole to complete presentence investigations.

Page 6-10:

- The excessive issuance of warrants, inadequate quality of police reports, insufficient training of police officers, excessive continuances granted by the courts, use of the Grand Jury as a screening mechanism, and insufficient communication among CJS agency heads were listed as problems impacting the operations of the Commonwealth Attorney's Office.

Page 6-16:

- The Commonwealth Attorney's Office does not have time for involvement in domestic relations cases.
- Because of the shortage of Commonwealth Attorneys, judges are forced to both prosecute and adjudicate juvenile misdemeanor and status offense cases.
- The City's Compensation Board continues to set salary compensation rates based on part-time salaries even though some Commonwealth Attorneys are now employed full-time.

Commonwealth's Attorney - Internal Problems

Page 6-9:

- Low salaries for Commonwealth Attorneys result in constant staff turnover.
- Constant staff turnovers require excessive time allotted to training of new attorneys, thus hampering operations.

Page 6-10:

- Administrative techniques need to be upgraded.
- Witnesses are often insufficiently interviewed due to excessive caseloads.

Courts - Systemic

Page 7-27:

- The Clerk of the General District Court feels that formal coordination among all segments of the CJS is needed.
- The Clerk also feels that a court administrator is required to coordinate the activities of all the courts.

Page 7-30:

- The existing group home program serving the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court need to be improved.
- The Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court feel that a public information bureau is needed to educate the public about the functions and actions of the court.

#### Courts - Internal Problems

Page 7-12:

- The Office of the Circuit Court Clerk experiences staff shortages and frequent staff turnovers due to low salaries.
- There is a backlog of criminal cases in Circuit Court because of continuance of cases.

Page 7-27:

- The Chief Clerk of the General District Court feels that an autonomous record system is needed to give them better control of their records and files.

Page 7-30:

- Better psychological testing of juveniles was reported as a need of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

Page 7-31:

- The Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court experiences a manpower shortage as well as a lack of space, should additional manpower become available.

Page 7-46:

- The Court Services Unit of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court cannot adequately serve their clients because of excessive caseloads.
- The Court Services Unit Director feels that its probation officers and volunteer coordinator are inadequately supervised because of the director's excessive workload.

Page 7-52:

- The Chief Magistrate feels that their physical facility must be upgraded to enhance the performance of its services.

Sheriff's Department - Systemic Problems

Page 8-4:

- The cases of detainees are frequently continued, lengthening the duration of detention in the City Jail.



Probation and Parole - Systemic Problems

Page 9-7:

- Presentence investigations are often delayed and supervision of clients is limited because of manpower shortage.
- Insufficient budget prohibits acquisition of additional staff or promotion of current staff.

### Action Considerations

The preceding list of perceived problems analyzed by the Assistance Team resulted in the following categorization of major needs and problem areas:

- Information and Communication.
- Training and Education.
- Equipment and Facilities.
- Manpower.
- Process Coordination.
- Administration and Management.

The listed problem areas and other significant findings of the Assistance Team suggest certain action considerations to address problem areas and major needs. As indicated earlier, the problems identified reflect the perspectives of the individuals interviewed by the Assistance Team. The other significant findings result from the Assistance Team's assessments deduced from voluminous data available to it through existing documents from various government and contractor activities in Portsmouth.

#### Information and Communication

Information and communication problems were reported for the Portsmouth Police Department, the Commonwealth Attorney's

Office and the courts. The PPD indicated seven systemic problem areas within this group. These problems reflected inadequate communication and information transfer between the PPD and the rest of the CJS in general, the Commonwealth's Attorney, the courts and the community.

The Commonwealth's Attorney reported one systemic problem in this category, and the courts reported two.

The major impact of these problems is that the Portsmouth CJS does not function as an integrated system and its processes are often hampered by:

- A lack of understanding of each other's roles.
- A lack of statistics which reflect an individual's total encounter with and passage through the CJS.
- A lack of factual information about the activities, resources, and limitations of individual CJS components.
- A lack of statistics and factual information describing the relationships of non-CJS agencies which interface with the CJS.
- A lack of statistics and information from the community about their reactions to the crime situation, the practices of the CJS and available resources to support the improvement of the CJS.

In response to these needs, the following considerations are offered:

- The current status of data collection throughout the CJS indicates a need to conduct detailed record management studies in each component.
- Each study should focus on the following:
  - The information needs of the component and sub-units to facilitate administration and management, budgeting, planning and analysis and performance of operational processes.
  - The data collection and recordation habits of personnel charged with those responsibilities.
  - Forms analysis to determine if existing forms are adequate and efficient for their designed purposes.
  - Item analysis to determine instances of duplication, information and format compatibility with other components utilizing the same information.
  - Utilization study to determine the actual uses to which collected data are applied, the frequency of use and the volume of data involved.

The Study of the Portsmouth/Virginia Beach Criminal Justice Information System will serve as a useful guide to CJS personnel conducting such studies. However, CJS personnel must remain aware of the changes in processes, functions and structure of these agencies and develop a system framework and data base which is implementable and will remain operable for a sufficient time to provide training, perform reporting and data processing tasks, and evaluate the efficacy of the system.

Information and communication problems were indicated seven times within the PPD. The major complaint was a lack of understanding of each others roles and open communication between various PPD units. This generally resulted from the lack of clearly defined channels of communication and documented guidelines and procedures. However, the arrival of the new chief, a concomitant reorganization of the Department, and the implementation of innovative techniques such as the task force concept, have all contributed to a decrease in the communication problems that currently exist.

The preparation of a departmental procedures manual, training in group processing for task force personnel, and recent staff turnovers will contribute to a continual increase in the communication within the Department.

#### Training and Education

Training and education needs were expressed by both the PPD and the Commonwealth's Attorney. In both of these agencies, the majority of the training received results from on-the-job exposure to required activities. The inadequacy of training is both a function of limited resources to fund the training of personnel and the limited availability of training courses. However, a more basic factor the lack of well-defined training and education programs geared to better job performance and career development.

It is suggested that each CJS component:

- Conduct an in-house survey of the experience, training and education of all staff.
- Detail ideal training and education programs in all areas of operation in the agency.
- Gather information about currently available training, i.e., scope, costs, location, duration, etc.
- Establish in-house structure to facilitate counseling of personnel seeking/needing training and/or education and to identify possible funds to support training and education programs.
- Establish formal mechanism for in-house transference of skills derived from out-of-house activities.
- Discuss joint training and education needs with other CJS components and community organizations, as well as transfer-of-skill programs.

#### Equipment and Facilities

Insufficient equipment and facilities were only reported by the PPD.

In every instance the complaints involved were internal to PPD

operations. The most significant deficiency was the radio communications

system which utilized hand-held portable units. These units have

limited range and greatly hamper communications in the field. An

equal problem is the use of civil defense personnel as dispatchers.

Because of a lack of understanding of police communication needs,

the dispatchers often relay calls ineffectively.

Radio communications would be greatly enhanced by:

- Training of civil defense dispatchers in police communications techniques. Training where possible should be both out-of-house and in-service. Use of experienced police personnel for on-the-job training would reduce training costs, increase efficiency and promote good will between the PPD and the dispatchers.
- Eventual establishment of separate radio communications system and acquisition of radio-equipped vehicles -- permanently installed.

#### Manpower

Manpower shortages were reported by the PPD, Commonwealth's Attorney and the Probation and Parole Department. This was the third ranked problem reported by the PPD, the only problem area reported by Probation and Parole and the lowest ranked problem reported by the Commonwealth's Attorney. With one exception, the problems in this category are internal to the reporting agency.

A manpower distribution and utilization study conducted by each of these components would serve to identify those areas where work-load is excessive, where production is inadequate, where redistribution of current staff might increase staff utility and where additional staff are needed.



### Process Coordination

Problems in coordination of operational processes were reported by all other CJS components in this report except Probation and Parole. The range of systemic problems reported is as follows:

PPD	3
Commonwealth's Attorney	8
Courts	2
Sheriff's Department	1

The range for internal problems is:

PPD	7
Commonwealth's Attorney	1
Courts	3

The systemic coordination problems centered around these issues:

- Excessive workloads in one component retarding processes in another.
- Practices in one component which impact other components, e.g., excessive granting of continuances to defendants by the judiciary.
- Insufficient support of processes in one component by staff of another component, e.g., constant turnover of Commonwealth Attorneys in PPD HIT Unit.

Internal problems usually result from traditional practices which are inefficient and detrimental to necessary activities, e.g., data collection habits, inadequate records management, insufficient interviewing of witnesses, inadequate psychological listing, inadequate supervision of staff and clients.

Systemic problems in process coordination are prime targets for the expanded IOTA Policy and Guidance Committee. It is suggested that problems be categorized in terms of broad functional areas within the scope of criminal justice, i.e., law enforcement, corrections, rehabilitation, treatment, crime prevention, etc. Then organizations within and outside the CJS with involvement and vested interests in a particular area can be brought to bear upon the identified problems and determine the most feasible and realistic solution through its analytic processes.

#### Administration and Management

With one exception, problems in this category were internal with the PPD reporting four, the Commonwealth's Attorney - one, and the Courts - two. Problems generally resulted from a lack of written guidelines and procedures, and definitions of roles and channels of authority.

Procedures and guidelines consistent with the current structure and functions of each agency and its units would alleviate such administrative and management problems. The IOTA report will be useful in such an effort to the extent that it describes roles and responsibilities, organization and processes of CJS components.

#### Other Needs

Another area of need in Portsmouth is that of substantial expansion of the scope of crime analysis. The following are areas where such analysis would be useful in meeting the needs of the CJS and community to effectively deal with the local crime situation:

- Crime rates by community, including incidence of specific crimes, description of the crime-committing population.
- Impact of crime on community.
- Description of potential crime-committing populations.
- Description of prevalence and nature of organized crime.
- Community reaction/response to crime.
- Impact of existing laws, police practices, conviction rates, etc., on incidence of crime.

**END**

7 Dec/1944