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✓ AN EVALUATION  
OF THE  
CITY OF KEENE  
"CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER"

GRANT NUMBER

78-I-A2035 B01

PROJECT PERIOD

May 1, 1978 - November 31, 1978

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NCJRS

RECORDS

ADMIN.

53394

## BACKGROUND

On November 7, 1977, the City of Keene applied to this Commission for federal funding assistance to implement a Crime Prevention Program within the Keene Police Department. On January 6, 1978 the full Commission approved an award of \$9,444 for the project although the applicant had requested funding in the amount of \$16,644 for the proposed one year project. The full amount was not able to be approved because of the limited amount of funds remaining in that particular program area. Before accepting the partial funding, the Keene City Council had to reconsider the proposed project to determine the optimum method of providing the desired services with the reduced funding which would be available to them. On March 8, 1978, the Commission received a letter from the Keene Chief of Police, Harold Becotte, stating that the City Council had decided to implement the project for a six month period beginning May 1, 1978. Following this notification, this agency officially approved the award of \$9,444 on a 90% federal, 5% Commission, 5% local match basis. The itemized budget reflects the following:

Personnel Services	\$ 7,326
Travel and Subsistence	860
Capital Equipment	785
All other	473

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\$ 9,444

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Keene, New Hampshire has a population in excess of 20,000 permanent residents plus a population of over 3,000 college students. In 1976, the Keene Police Department became concerned over the increase in

crimes of burglary, larceny and vandalism which had caused alarm to the residents and merchants of the city. To illustrate this alarm, Police Department records indicate that in a one month period the city suffered from thirty-nine separate burglaries. Thirty-one of these crimes occurred in private homes and were accomplished without forcible entry. In order to cope with the increase in these types of crimes, Police Chief Harold Becotte assigned Officer David Hackler the duty of Crime Prevention Officer in addition to his regular duties. It became quickly apparent to Chief Becotte that this action was insufficient to cope with the problem and that a full and comprehensive Crime Prevention Program was required.

Although in 1977 Chief Becotte requested the additional position of full-time Crime Prevention Officer, the City Council voted not to approve this request because of a job limitation policy. Public outcry over this decision was so great that the City Council decided to consider the matter further and assigned the project to several Council Committees for study. The committee's studies resulted in a recommendation that the Council reconsider the Chief's request and on September 1, 1977 the City Council voted to implement a comprehensive Crime Prevention Program.

To ensure that the most qualified individual would be hired for the position of Crime Prevention Officer, the City Council requested that the City Manager prepare a detailed job description for the position and that the individual be selected through an appropriate testing process. After producing the job description, the position was appropriately advertised and responding applicants were tested by the State's Department of

Personnel. The person selected through this procedure was Sgt. David Hackler, a member of the Keene Police Department. Sgt. Hackler, a ten year veteran of the Department is the individual who had held the part-time position of Crime Prevention Officer from June through December, 1976.

In the grant application, Chief Becotte outlined the following goals and objectives for the first year of operation of the project:

Familiarization of current theories of community planning.

Development of those basic skills necessary to conduct a premises survey and make recommendations regarding security improvements.

To develop the ability to present a practical explanation of "risk management" to departmental personnel and the general public.

Become familiar with the development of municipal security codes.

Generate an awareness of crime prevention and its concept to our citizens by staging public exhibitions and advertising campaigns on crime prevention.

Generate departmental-wide enthusiasm for crime prevention.

Reduce identified offenses within certain categories of crimes against property, and as appropriate and possible, crimes against persons.

#### PROJECT OPERATION

Sgt. Hackler began his duties as full-time Crime Prevention Officer on May 1, 1978. His initial efforts toward reducing the crimes of burglary, larceny, and vandalism focused on educating the public on methods of safeguarding property. Sgt. Hackler was able to obtain time on the two radio stations servicing the Keene area. One station devotes a thirty minute period every two weeks for an "open mike" program during which Sgt. Hackler and/or other crime prevention figures discuss crime and prevention topics with the listeners. The other station provides a thirty minute period each month during which the Crime Prevention

Officer and guests discuss crime problems and crime prevention methods. Both types of programs have thus far been well received by the citizens and merchants in the area.

In addition, public awareness is maintained by articles on crime prevention which appear regularly in the two area newspapers.

In an effort to reduce shoplifting in local stores, Sgt. Hackler conducts shoplifting seminars for merchants and security guards. Stressed here are optimum methods of displaying merchandise and methods of surveillance of shoppers in order to minimize theft. Thus far, four seminars have been conducted and have been enthusiastically received.

Much emphasis on the crime prevention effort has been placed on reaching as many civic, fraternal and school groups as possible. During the first five months of the project the Crime Prevention Officer has presented lectures to twelve groups with a total audience of three hundred thirty-three people. Topics have included security of premises and property, identification of property and procedures for reporting crimes or suspicious activities.

The Keene Police Department has implemented a program entitled Police and Community Information and Concern. This involves meetings with the public wherein the Chief of Police and the Crime Prevention Officer present lectures followed by dialogue and questions involving the public. This program has also enjoyed positive public support.

Sgt. Hackler was instrumental in establishing a training program for babysitters which is presented by faculty at the Keene Junior High School. The program format, developed by the Crime Prevention Officer, is aimed at training youngsters who babysit in methods of safeguarding the home against burglars or other intruders and in reporting suspicious actions or actual crimes.

During the period of the project, several fairs and shows were held in the Keene area in which the Crime Prevention Program was represented. In each of these events a booth was set up for merchants to display various security wares such as dead bolt locks, security screens, alarm systems and the like. Sgt. Hackler personally devoted as much time as possible at these booths during the term of the event.

At this writing, Sgt. Hackler is in the process of establishing a Community Watch Program. It is envisioned that several geographical areas, or neighborhoods will be designated in which the citizens will cooperate in keeping surveillance on the property of those residents who are away from home for appreciable periods. Each resident in an area will have a roster of the names, addresses and phone numbers of all residents in that area. A neighborhood Chief will be designated to coordinate the surveillance and reporting activities of each group. It is planned that each of the groups will be instructed on procedures to follow to minimize the opportunity for burglary or vandalism of a vacant home.

An important aspect of the Crime Prevention Program in Keene is "Operation ID". Citizens are encouraged to permanently engrave their "stealable" belongings such as televisions, stereos and other appliances. Engraving equipment is provided at no cost for this purpose and citizens may obtain the equipment on a library card, as if they were checking out a book.

In addition to the programs mentioned above, Sgt. Hackler has plans to further develop the Crime Prevention Program in the future. These plans include: an assault prevention program, training seminars in crime prevention for surrounding small town police departments, a crime prevention program in the schools, a risk management program for business establishments, bad check seminars for local business men, and a com-

prehensive security inspection program.

Although the Keene Police Department maintains statistics on numbers of arrests and convictions for various types of crimes, it was felt by the evaluator that these data would not significantly indicate the effectiveness of the Crime Prevention Program for the relatively short period of its existence. These data should, however, be useful in helping to assess project effectiveness in the future.

It was originally planned that the Crime Prevention Officer would attend a training course under this grant. When only a portion of the requested funding was awarded it was decided that optimum use of available funds would not provide for that expense. It is planned, however, that Sgt. Hackler will attend a crime prevention course in the near future.

During the course of the evaluation, Police Chief Harold Becotte as well as Sgt. Hackler were interviewed. Both of these men are highly supportive of the Crime Prevention Program and are enthusiastic in meeting the project's objectives.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the reduced funding award for this project it has been implemented in a professional and enthusiastic manner. As stated above, Sgt. Hackler is completely dedicated to his task as evidenced by project accomplishments, public acceptance and future plans. It is therefore recommended that this commission give favorable consideration to renewal funding for the project in accordance with established policy.





**END**