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FINAL REPORT

COMMUNITY ISSUES FORUM: SPECIAL FOCUS LAW ENFORCEMENT

LEAA GRANT #76DF-99-0017

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An LEAA grant of \$134,620 funded 24 Community Issues Forums (CIF) across the nation during the period of November 11, 1975 to December 31, 1976. This narrative report on the project is submitted to supplement the report prepared by the independent evaluator. The CIF's brought together community residents for a day of identifying and planning for the challenges of their community with a particular focus on problems of law enforcement. The grant made possible the design of the Forum; the production of materials; selection of communities; training of workshop leaders, steering committees, and Forum coordinators; recruitment of participants and finally, the Forums and the production of the 24 documents. A total of more than 3,700 citizens of all ages and from all economic and educational strata participated in the 24 Forums.

#### SET-UP

Grant staff personnel and local ICA staff worked together to recruit and set up Forums. Cities were selected, then possible target communities were selected within the city and visits to local people who could serve as sponsors were made. Local ICA staff then continued to assist the community in the set-up, reporting regularly on progress to the Program Promotion Assistant in Chicago. In some cases, it was necessary for staff from Chicago to make several trips to the community and in one case, a faculty member spent the entire week preceding a Forum in the community helping with the set-up. The criteria for city selection, site selection and recruitment strategies were adapted to the particular local situation but following are the basic criteria used in the process.

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1. TARGET CITIES were selected on the basis of three factors.
  - a. Geographic spread. Forums were held in all sections of the nation in order to test the format over a broad cultural spectrum. All were held in urban areas that have felt the impact of sociological change which has resulted in a rise in crime.
  - b. ICA Staff Presence. Cities were selected in which ICA staff are located or are in close proximity and have taken significant steps in training or consulting with community leadership. Because ICA staff are located in 44 major cities in the U.S., the possibilities were extensive.
  - c. Regional significance. Cities which are regional centers of population, trade, or cultural activity were given high priority in order to maximize program visibility to the broadest possible population.
2. TARGET COMMUNITIES were selected on the basis of three factors.
  - a. Concerned citizenry. Any community which had a crime rate high enough to be of inordinate concern to its citizenry was a potential site for CIF.
  - b. Diverse population factors. Communities were selected so that the CIF would be demonstrated in varied conditions of population. Different mixes of ethnic population, income level, educational level, and age level allowed evaluators to assess the impact of the program on several different types of constituencies.
  - c. Practicality. Sites were confirmed and scheduled on the basis of support networks which had developed during

the course of work with local ICA staff. In some cases local political situations or other conditions made the program undesirable at the time. Kansas City is an example of this. However, in that instance, before the project's duration it was possible to return and schedule a CIF there.

c. RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES were constructed on the basis of several criteria.

a. Key target population. A number of groups exist in communities which are striving after the same goals which the CIF program seeks. These groups often see the mutual benefit that could be obtained by their cooperation with ICA staff on implementation steps for the CIF. Their active support and participation in the project was invited. These types of citizen groups, including community school districts, other LEAA fundees, police-community relations committees, and even police and sheriff's offices were requested to help sponsor and promote the forum event in their locality. When one group decided to sponsor the CIF, members were asked to participate in the practical tasks leading up to the CIF and other groups were invited to co-sponsor the event.

b. Key contact person. One or two people who have had experience in organizing programs similar to the CIF or who have broad contacts across the community were invited to work closely with ICA staff and often provided valuable information on ways to involve other key groups and

individuals with shared interests.

- c. Sponsor participation. Sponsor and co-sponsor groups were invited to encourage a number of their own members to attend the event. This insured that the basic constituency of concerned citizenry in the community was in attendance. If no criminal justice agency had decided to sponsor the event, other sponsors were encouraged to contact such agencies and invite participation in the event.
- d. Broad-based promotion. Media advertisement, news articles and poster campaigns were used to attract and invite the largest possible range of the community's populace.

#### CIF'S SCHEDULED AND HELD

Following is a list of the 24 CIF's the dates number of participants, and a brief description of the community.

1. Lawton, Oklahoma. 4/24/76. 69 participants  
Community composed of Blacks, Native Americans, and Whites. City had greatest increase in crime during 1975 of any city its size.
2. St. Louis, Missouri. 5/5/76. 143 participants  
Held in Police District #7 which has the highest crime rate in the City. Sponsored by a high school.
3. Houston, Texas. 5/14/76. 108 participants  
Mainly White community, suburban but experiencing change. Crime rate has increased 70% over 1972 rate and the trend continues.
4. Montgomery, Alabama. 5/15/76. 67 participants  
Police department sponsored it in their target community. Mostly White, blue collar.
5. Oklahoma City. 5/8/76. 95 participants  
Inner city community. Approximately 40% Black, 30% White, 20% Mexican-American and 10% Native American. 72% of community on welfare and 8% with income of \$50,000 up.

6. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. 5/15/76. 160 participants  
Deteriorating community with 50% Black and remainder of  
Italian and Jewish backgrounds. Sponsored by Community Center.
7. Atlanta, Georgia. 6/5/76. 143 participants  
Black community with nearly half of population living in  
East Lake Meadows housing project. Rising level of crime.
8. Washington, D.C. 6/5/76. 125 participants  
All Black, lower income, high crime community.
9. Billings, Montana. 6/9/76. 35 participants  
White community. Deteriorating services.
10. Burley, Utah. 6/9/76. 92 participants  
White, rural oriented community. Small Native American and  
Mexican-American population. Most prevalent distinction  
that between Latter Day Saints and other Protestant demoninations.
11. Brighton, Colorado. 6/12/76. 65 participants  
White, upper-middle class. Experiencing rising "suburban crime."
12. San Francisco, California. 6/12/76. 70 participants.  
Inner-city community. 30% Latino, 60% Anglo, and 10% Oriental  
and Pacific Islander. Active community organizations have  
been ineffective in meeting problems.
13. San Jose, California. 6/12/76. 51 participants  
Mainly White community with a few Black and Spanish speaking  
residents. Directed at the youth, with Middle School serving  
as facility.
14. Cincinnati, Ohio. 6/12/76. 51 participants  
Held in the Four Hilltop Communities, two of which rank in the  
top five highest crime areas. 70% of population is Black  
and 40% are on welfare.
15. Albuquerque, New Mexico. 6/19/76. 47 participants  
City-wide. White and Chicano population. Lower to middle  
class participants.
16. New Orleans, Louisiana. 6/26/76. 170 participants  
Sponsored by Sheriff with extensive city-wide participation  
of criminal justice personnel and including inmates of prisons.
17. Baltimore, Maryland. 8/31/76. 92 participants  
Held in Eastern Terrace, a 90% Black community with a halfway  
facility for newly released inmates of correctional institutions.  
Executive Director played leadership role.
18. Fifth City, Chicago. 7/24/76. 200 participants  
Black, inner-city community working on problems of community  
renewal.

19. Detroit, Michigan. 7/31/76. 181 participants.  
Held in 13th precinct which has highest crime rate in city.  
Low income, Black community.
20. Albany, New York. 7/31/76. 79 participants.  
Participants from over city. Good percentage of law  
enforcement staff present.
21. Quincy, Illinois. 9/15/76. 230 participants.  
Held in high school and geared to youth and families. Low to  
middle income community, mainly White.
22. East St. Louis, Illinois. 10/23/76. 116 participants.  
Deteriorating community. All Black, low income, high crime rate.
23. Kansas City, Missouri. 11/12/76. 1139 participants.  
Drew participants from city. Strongly supported by LEAA and  
criminal justice agencies.
24. Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 11/20/76. 96 participants.  
White, European ethnic, particularly Polish, community.  
Conservative, concerned about law enforcement.

Three CIF's which can be held up as examples of significant events for the local community were those held in Kansas City, Detroit, and East St. Louis.

1. Kansas City. This CIF had over 1000 participants. A City-wide Forum, it was actively supported by regional and local LEAA offices and by LEAA funded groups in the city and by city and community structures. It was held on a weekday and released time was granted by many businesses and agencies to their personnel, expanding the number of participants significantly. Law enforcement personnel from all levels were present - a large number of city police, judges and other representatives of the judicial system, personnel from the prisons in the area, and social service personnel from law enforcement and judicial agencies who provide services to families and youth. The City provided a consultant to work with the Steering Committee which was extremely helpful in keeping things moving.

2. In Houston, there were 108 participants in the CIF including a large number of law enforcement personnel. A steering committee of representatives from local community groups and law enforcement personnel planned the CIF and agencies provided staff with released time, even assigning many to attend. This was one of the few CIF's in which the local committee decided to charge for the lunch. A fine bar-b-que was provided for \$9.00 with agencies and businesses paying the fee for their people. (Students and youth were charged a lower rate.) The fact that this did not seem to deter people from attending was an indication that the community was solidly committed to the day.

3. In East St. Louis, the CIF was held in a particularly tense neighborhood situation as evidenced by the "advance men" who proceeded the Mayor to inspect the facility and working groups and the four body guards who accompanied him. Many felt that a real move in improving community-police relations was made possible by the presence of 20 uniformed police who participated with the community residents. While many had felt it was an impossible situation, communication between local people and law enforcement personnel did occur and proposals were developed together. A citizens' group has been formed as a result of the CIF. Their initial action was screening candidates running for the office of alderman.

Experience has shown that factors which contributed to particularly successful CIF's included:

1. Both local community groups and law enforcement personnel were actively engaged in the planning of the Forum. When



only one of the two groups assumed major responsibility, it was much more difficult.

2. The police department felt the need of developing its channels of social services within the local community.
3. The LEAA office and officials offered assistance and support.
4. Law enforcement agencies and businesses placed sufficient emphasis on the Forum to assign people to attend on released time.

#### DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Budgetary - The major budgetary difficulty in the CIF program was the delay in implementing the grant. While the grant was originally designated for the period of November 5, 1975 through May 1976, the first money was not received by the Chicago ICA office until March 30, 1976. This resulted in delays in putting staff on salary and production of materials. This then resulted in a slow start-up of recruitment and set-up at the local level. The outcome of this delay was that staff were on salary for two months longer than was originally projected, and the prolonged period of implementation meant that the project proved to be much more expensive for the ICA than anticipated.

Programatic - The ICA staff experienced many different receptions from law enforcement people, (including LEAA officials) when they were approached with the CIF program. In some cases, those approached were extremely interested in the program and were ready to lend their support and staff to the project. In other cases, particularly where previous community meetings had directed criticism toward the efforts of local law enforcement officials, there was little eagerness to participate and in some cases, active resistance to the program. Sometimes it was possible to overcome this resistance and sometimes it was

necessary to drop that community from the list of possible sites. It is the opinion of all ICA staff who participated in the Forums that at the conclusion of all 24 CIF's the reaction of the community, including law enforcement staff, to the design of the CIF and to the effect upon community-law enforcement relations was positive.

Staff found some local and regional LEAA offices most receptive to the program and some contributed greatly to the success of the Forum. In other situations, this was not the case and several times, a proposed outline of communities was not approved by the regional or local office and the site selection process had to begin over again using the criteria and/or the suggestions of the LEAA officials. It should be noted that, in some cases, these turned out to be helpful new directions (East St. Louis and Quincy, Illinois were scheduled as a result of this and both proved to be very effective CIF's.) However, it did create some frustration among staff and certainly did result in more time and more expense. The CIF held in 5th City, Chicago should be mentioned here. This had been scheduled and was in the planning stage when the local LEAA office rejected the site on the basis that the community was already working on its problems of law enforcement. There were several other Forums being considered, in Los Angeles, Brooklyn, and Pittsburgh. However, these ran into problems and time ran out before it was possible to see them through to completion. Therefore, 5th City has been included as one of the 24, understanding that the local LEAA office had recommended another be put in its place.

## CONCLUSION

The grant staff and the ICA staff who worked with CIF's in local communities have been excited with the results of the CIF program. The Forum is a viable construct to awaken a community to its possibilities of working together as a cohesive unit to identify their problems in the arenas of law enforcement and to work through a consensed approach to dealing with the same.

Judy Tresise, grant staff who was present at a number of CIF's, reports that time and time again at the final plenary of the day, both law enforcement officials and community residents would stand and make remarks similar to "I didn't believe the community/police felt this way. I didn't know so many people cared what happened here." The Forum itself, when well supported by community businesses, agencies, and civic groups was an affirmation for the community of its potential to deal with its problems of law enforcement in a comprehensive context. It would appear that the role of the ICA staff in initiating the Forum and in its presence through the celebration at the end of the day was an extremely enabling dynamic. Having a third party, an objective presence, allowed potential problems and crises to be worked through and dealt with in a way that would not have been possible otherwise.

Several local ICA offices report that interest has developed out of this initial CIF in holding future Forums. Specific mention of this has come from Kansas City, Detroit, and Baltimore. Whether the funding and the staff to implement this will be available is yet a question.



**END**