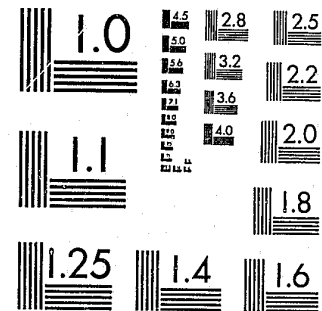


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ODTD, October 30, 1981

NIJ Initiative on Violent CrimeI. Introduction

This paper proposes an NIJ initiative on violent crime, in addition to the research efforts in that area now underway or planned for FY 1982. It will be supported within NIJ's present budget by reallocation of funds, some of which has already occurred -- e.g., initiation of a nationwide search for the emerging programs addressing violent crime, proposals reflect the following principles and assumptions, and plans:

- . In addition to the clear need to support careful and focused research, development, and evaluation, the most appropriate Federal role to help state and local agencies combat violent crime is (1) to quickly identify and assess emerging strategies and (2) to provide highly targeted technical assistance and training to help criminal justice agencies use their own resources to adopt effective new approaches.
- . Such technical assistance and training thus has a dual focus: (1) to assist agencies in finding the necessary resources within their own budgets, organizations, and jurisdictions, and (2) to provide expertise on the substance and operation of the new technique;
- . NIJ is in a position to obtain, capitalize on, and exploit the best of emerging new knowledge across all areas of criminal justice, and to develop and introduce of new and improved techniques. The Federal effort should not be limited to the expansion and refinement of existing approaches no matter how worthy or popular these may be.
- . NIJ will initiate an immediate and aggressive search for the best of those programs which states and communities are initiating independently to deal with the problems of violent crime. (Plans appear in Section III). The objectives of this effort are:
 - to rapidly define and share information on the state-of-the-art in violent crime;
 - to identify and publicize the best of these approaches;

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-- to provide prompt assessment and evaluation assistance to programs showing particular promise and to share the resulting information with the field;

-- where highly innovative or significant approaches are emerging, to use these as "natural test beds" and to provide technical assistance to upgrade and enhance the effort and an evaluation capability to assess effectiveness, costs, and impact.

Where expertise already exists within the practitioner community, the Federal effort in technical assistance should encourage and support, rather than supplant, technical assistance among peers. (In the area of career criminal programs, for example, the expertise of the Major Violator Unit of San Diego, California, and the Juvenile Career Criminal Program of Los Angeles, California would be tapped.) Similarly, where appropriate, private sector and cooperate support to assist criminal justice agencies would be sought.

II. Training and Technical Assistance for Agencies Wishing to Implement New Programs

The initial focus of this effort will be to assist police departments in implementing one of two programs of proven effectiveness.

Previous Institute research and its earlier Exemplary Projects Program have identified a number of promising operational responses to violent crime. Evaluations of two such programs, the Hidden Cameras Project in Seattle, Washington, and the Street Crime Unit in New York City show conclusive evidence of successful impact.

In Seattle the robbery clearance rate was doubled at businesses equipped with hidden cameras: 68% (compared to 34% in all other businesses). More than twice as many of the robbers at these stores were identified, arrested and convicted: 48% compared to only 19% in all other businesses. Perhaps more significant, although deterrence was not a specific goal of the Hidden Cameras Project, commercial robberies in Seattle dropped 38.8% during the project's first 10 months of operation.

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In New York, the Street Crime Unit -- a plainclothes decoy program aimed at reducing street crimes of robbery, grand larceny and assault -- showed similar success. Over the program's first two years of operations, SCC was credited with effecting a 10.17% reduction in robbery and a 12.56% reduction in grand larceny from persons.

Some cities have implemented programs similar to the Seattle and New York models, and with similar success. (Tucson, Arizona's Robbery Camera Program, for example, reported a 69% reduction in convenience store robberies and a 77% decrease in liquor store robberies). Many jurisdictions, however, perceive the costs of a hidden cameras-type program (perhaps \$50,000 to \$100,000) or a street crime unit as too high given today's fiscal constraints, and further believe that the performance of police patrol and response to citizen calls for service must take precedence in the competition for scarce resources.

Institute research, however, has shown clearly that responding to all citizen calls for service is wasteful and unnecessary, that expensive traditional preventive patrol is of dubious value, and that by reallocation and managing resources in a more efficient manner, police departments can improve performance and free resources for targeted new approaches.

The Institute's work in the area of police fiscal and resource management -- including Managing Criminal Investigations, Managing Patrol Operations, Measuring the Costs of Police Services, and Differential Police Response to Call for Service -- provides the models for such reallocation of effort. NIJ would provide technical assistance to individual agencies in reviewing and analyzing their own operation; identifying options for costs savings or reallocating internal resources, and then in using those savings to mount a targeted and effective program directed against violent crime.

III. Identification and Assessment of Police, Prosecution and Corrections Programs in Violent Crime

- A. Immediate nationwide search: Using funds now allocated for the Exemplary Projects Program, and the program/contract capabilities already in place, NIJ is initiating an aggressive search for effective police, prosecution and corrections programs addressing violent crime. A literature review is now underway to quickly define the state-of-the-art and to lay the groundwork for an intensive phone survey (to begin in late November) to criminal justice agencies, professional organizations, researchers, and other experts throughout the country. Focused phone interviews will seek additional information on notable projects identified in the review and also solicit nomination and information on new and promising strategies not yet covered in the literature. These leads will be followed up in turn. The "snowball" technique should identify a high proportion of relevant projects. The phone survey is to be complete by December 31, 1981.
- B. Advisory Board: - Concurrently NIJ will develop and name an Advisory Board for the review and selection process. The Board will be dominated by leading practitioners in the areas under review to ensure insight into both state and local practice and information needs. We anticipate naming the Board in mid-December, and involving them in the refinement of standards and criteria for their area of expertise.
- C. Solicitation and Review of Programs; and Publication of Survey Results: Applications and program information will be actively solicited from all noteworthy projects identified through the survey. In addition, the program will be publically announced and applications accepted from other projects in the topic area that wish to be considered. All will be screened against criteria of demonstrated effectiveness, goals achievement, cost efficiency, transferability, etc., analysis of the range of program types and the level of program and evaluation information available on each will be prepared for Advisory Board review.

Advisors will be convened in early March, 1982 to review the candidate projects in their area and determine those worthy of on-site validation. The analysis of project information, together with an issues paper synthesizing the results of the national survey and literature review, will not only provide working documents for the advisory Board, but also will be the basis for an immediate publication on programs addressing violent crime.

Short-term assessments of those projects selected by the advisors would be conducted, and the Advisory Boards reconvened in July, 1982, to review the results.

- D. Selection Options -- Transferring the Best Techniques: Where project evaluations confirms the effectiveness and impact of a particular strategy, the project will be widely publicized, the program operation documented and disseminated, and the technique could immediately become the focus of an NIJ technical assistance and transfer effort as described in Section II.

Where evaluation findings are less conclusive, but the advisors feel the projects represent potentially useful innovations in the field, the assessment studies will provide the basis for immediate publication of detailed program information of those techniques (e.g. Notable Police Programs in Violent Crime).

IV. Assessment, Evaluation, and Technical Assistance

It is highly probable that conclusive evaluation findings will be available only for a very small percentage of candidates. They may well be totally lacking for the newer and perhaps most innovative efforts. Working with the Advisory Board, NIJ will move to assist the best and most promising of these programs:

- NIJ has in place the capability and delivery mechanism to provide agencies with short-term assistance in assessment design, data collection and analysis, so that they can conduct their own evaluations. If positive, the findings and program can be widely shared; at a minimum the evaluation capabilities of the agency will have been significantly upgraded;

- Where an approach appears highly promising but lacks rigorous evaluation, NIJ may tap its evaluation program to commission an independent evaluation of the effort in order to speed the process of bringing new findings to the field;
- Where embryonic projects of particular significance are found, NIJ can build on such local efforts as a natural test bed, providing technical assistance to support and enhance the development process and then testing and evaluating its impact. The technical assistance provided would address both management issues (upgrading fiscal, analytic, and evaluation capabilities) and substantive special assistance tailored to project needs and designed to enhance the probability of success.

As information and new models are developed through each of these avenues, they also would be widely disseminated and shared.

V. Informing the Policy-Maker and Practitioner

The following documents are planned immediate starts in FY 1982:

- A. Victim Compensation Study: In response to the recommendation of the Attorney General's Task Force on Violent Crime, NIJ will undertake a study of costs and experience of victim compensation programs throughout the country, updating its existing study on the topic and focusing particularly on costs, benefits, legislative options, program structure, and funding alternatives. Staff of the Task Force have been consulted, testimony before the Task Force reviewed, and an issues paper is now in preparation.
- B. Policy and Design Considerations in Correctional Facility Construction: This two-volume document will be a cooperative interagency initiative which draws upon the collective experiences of NIJ, LEAA and NIC in regard to prison crowding and construction. The document is designed to assist the correctional administration and will address: 1.) The systemic nature of prison crowding and the policy issues and options which relate to decisions to build; and 2.) methods for planning and managing architectural design and construction.

- C. Crime in Public Schools: The purpose of this document is twofold: 1.) To assist in building a national consensus that crime and violence have no rightful place in the school and that vigorous law enforcement is a natural and reasonable response; and 2.) Recognizing that the problem cuts across education and law enforcement, methods for developing a coordinated response to identify and prosecute juveniles committing crimes on school grounds will be described.

- D. Serving Two Masters: The Issue for Victim Services Meeting the Needs of the Individual and the System

The growing research base and program experience in the area of victim services has shown that the needs and objectives of the criminal justice system have not always been compatible with the needs of the individual victim. In many jurisdictions, victim services agencies, whether in the system or independent of it, have accepted the difficult task of both providing responsive service to the individual and the system, and maintaining a strong link between the two. This Program Models document will identify programs that have gained access to and acceptance by crime victims and criminal justice personnel, and have demonstrated both sensitivity to the needs of different types of victims, particularly victims of violent crime, and the criminal justice goals of apprehension and conviction.

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