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An Analysis of Curfew Projects in Five Cities

The Walter Rand Institute, at the request of the Evaluation Subcommittee researched current and past curfew projects in five cities, including:

- Denver, CO
- Jacksonville, FL
- North Little Rock, AR
- New Orleans, LA
- Phoenix, AZ

The subcommittee analyzed projects based on funding, data-sharing, legitimacy, staffing, volunteers, service providers, and the number of curfew violators, as shown in Table 1. Curfew ordinances in each of the cities were examined for a more extensive analysis, as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

DENVER, CO

The SafeNite project best resembles the project in Camden because community-based organizations manage both projects.

Staffing and Structure

The SafeNite curfew project in Denver is designed to reduce the risk of youth being the victim or perpetrator of crime during curfew hours. It is led by an executive director in collaboration with the city and the police department. There is a steering committee with members from the police department, the public school system, city council, the city attorney, licensed therapists, and social service counselors. The committee's role is to provide the executive director and collaborating organizations with guidance and feedback; the steering committee has no formal decision-making responsibility. The curfew project is operated out of community center and recreation buildings throughout the city. There are twelve full-time staff that alternate to allow for three to four staff to be present for each event; the executive director of the project noted the importance of alternating staff to avoid burn-out. Although volunteers are not relied upon, and rarely used, the project collaborates with local universities to provide internship credits for students who volunteer.

Intake Process

Youth that violate the curfew ordinance are transported by police officers who are assigned to the project to the curfew center to be processed; the youth meet with human service counselors prior to being released to a parent or guardian. Parents and guardians of youth who violate the curfew may be fined for permitting the youth to violate the curfew ordinance. Police issue the youth a summons to appear in court, and if the youth participates in the diversion program recommended by the counselor, the fine is revoked. Diversion programs can range from attending a workshop on problem-solving to participating in therapy or treatment; there are over 200 community and social service programs available to curfew violators.

Legitimacy

SafeNite engages the social service providers through marketing the project in the community, attending meetings in schools and the community, and strong support from the mayor. SafeNite advocates provide the community with statistics as to how the project has benefited the community, and that, coupled with the direct funding from the city, enabled the project to gain legitimacy within the community. The coordinator did note, however, that it took two years for the project to gain legitimacy within the community.

Data-Sharing

Data is shared with the advisory committee and social services providers upon request. Both the youth and the parent/guardian must sign a release form for the data to be shared. The city attorney was heavily involved in implementing the data-sharing process and continues to be available for consultation and assistance.

NEW ORLEANS, LA

Although the curfew project in New Orleans lost funding, it had a strong social services component, providing a potential framework for Camden's project.

Staffing and Structure

The curfew project in New Orleans no longer exists due to the destruction of the Central Curfew Center by Hurricane Katrina. When the curfew project existed, it was led by the Juvenile Division of the police department. The curfew project was staffed each night by two to three officers; the police department sent out memos requesting officers to work at the curfew center for overtime. Patrol officers who were responsible for picking up the youth were not paid overtime because it was part of their nightly duties. Generally, there were three to four social service counselors on duty at the curfew center each night. There were two additional civilians employed by the police department who assisted the officers with paperwork; these civilians were paid a salary from the police department. There were rarely any volunteers.

Intake Process

Youth who violated the curfew ordinance were picked up by patrol officers and taken to the curfew center. At the center, the youth were interviewed by a counselor, and a social service program was recommended; the youth were required to participate in the program with their parent/guardian. On the third violation in a year, the parent/guardian was fined for allowing the youth to violate the curfew ordinance.

Funding and Legitimacy

The curfew project was funded through a federal grant that the state received, which in turn allocated the money to the city. A component of the grant was that the funds could be utilized to cover any expenses except the building, which had to be donated or rent-free. The social service organization that collaborated with the police department gained legitimacy through its partnership with the department, not the curfew ordinance.

JACKSONVILLE, FL

The curfew project in Jacksonville lost partial funding, but social service agencies were heavily involved, so comparable information to develop Camden's project may be gathered.

Staffing and Structure

While the curfew project in Jacksonville continues to exist, the curfew center lost its funding. The curfew project is enforced in six zones throughout the city; the overall project is led by the sheriff's office, and each zone is led by a captain. When the curfew center existed, two to four police staffed it each night, and there were not any volunteers.

Legitimacy

All social service agencies and city departments that were represented were part of an inter-agency agreement and paid a salary through the project. The project gained legitimacy within the community through the full cooperation of the agencies involved and through city funding.

Intake Process

Youth who violated the curfew were brought to the curfew center and screened to determine if they had committed additional violations that required court review. Those with additional violations were moved to a secure section of the center for further screening and assessment; youth without additional violations were held in the nonsecure section of the curfew center and screened to determine whether they had problems with drug and alcohol abuse, mental health, or family dynamics. Parents/guardians were then contacted to pick up the youth; depending on the nature of the services warranted, either a letter was presented to the parents recommending follow-up services, which they could voluntarily accept or reject, or a court referral is made for a "family in need of services." Services available include counseling, parenting training, treatment for drug and alcohol abuse, treatment for mental illness, and training in family dynamics and interpersonal communication skills. Repeat curfew violators were also taken to the curfew center to be screened to determine what services may be provided to the youth and their families to help address the situation.

PHOENIX, AZ

The project in Phoenix is administered by the police department, and social service providers play a minor role; the juvenile court system is responsible for determining if the violator meets the requirements to participate in a community service program.

Staffing and Structure

The curfew project in Phoenix is led by a collaboration between the police department and the juvenile court system; the police department enforces the curfew ordinance and the court system determines requirements for participating in a diversion program. The curfew center is staffed with two permanent employees and two alternating police officers. One police squad is responsible for picking up youth who are violating the curfew.

Intake Process

The Phoenix Police Department partners with the Department of Parks and Recreation, which provides the building for the curfew center. Youth that violate the curfew ordinance are brought to the curfew center by the police officers and processed; administrative requirements for police officers are kept to a minimum to allow officers to return sooner to patrol duties. At the curfew center, the youth are given a contact name and number in the juvenile court system; the court determines if the youth meets the requirements (first-time offender, no previous record, and not under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol) to participate in a diversion program, which is typically community service. If the youth fails to meet the requirements for participation or fails to complete the program, he is issued a fine for violating the curfew. The parent or guardian of the youth may also be fined for permitting the youth to violate the curfew ordinance.

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR

The North Little Rock project serves as an example of a project operating with limited funds, which may provide Camden's project with alternative approaches.

Structure

The North Little Rock Police Department recognizes that its limited resources require a curfew project that is as simple as possible. Therefore, the police department enforces the curfew ordinance, but there is no curfew project in place that is structured like the other four cities being evaluated.

Intake Process

When the youth is picked up for a curfew violation, he or she is taken to police headquarters and turned over to a juvenile officer. The youth is detained in a non-secure area of headquarters designated for curfew violators while arrangements are made with a parent or guardian to return the youth home. A concentrated effort is made to simplify the extensive reporting requirements for a juvenile arrest by creating a 1-page form for a curfew violation that requires the officer to complete ten items of information. The curfew ordinance and circumstances of the violation are reviewed with the parent or guardian and the child. Alternatively, because there is not a specific curfew project like the other four cities, any officer who picks up youth violating the curfew may take him or her home. Once at home, the parent or guardian must sign a notice of curfew violation; after the third violation in a year, the youth is fined.

Data-Sharing

Data is shared with any police officer, and only data in the aggregate can be shared with the general public. If social services need to be contacted because the police suspect abuse or neglect, the officer can share basic information (name, address, DOB, and the fact that the youth was picked up for violating the curfew).

Table 1: Comprehensive Data on Curfew Projects in Five Cities

CITY	# FULL-TIME STAFF/# POLICE OFFICERS/ LEADERSHIP*	# VOLUNTEERS*	SERVICE PROVIDERS PRESENT	AVERAGE # VIOLATORS*	FUNDING	DATA-SHARING	LEGITIMACY	FREQUENCY OF EVENTS	DESIGNATED CURFEW CENTER
Denver	4 staff and 3 officers/ executive director and advisory committee	0	Yes	15-20	City and federal grant	Advisory committee and social service providers; aggregate with public	Marketing and direct city funding	7 nights/week April-September	Yes
New Orleans	2 staff and 3 officers/Juvenile Division of Police Department	0	Yes, 3-4	30	City via federal grant	Social service provider maintained records; aggregate with public	Direct city funding and police department administered	7 nights/week all year	Yes
Jacksonville	2-4 officers/ Sheriff's Office	0	Yes	25-30	City and state grant	—	Direct city funding and inter-agency cooperation	7 nights/week all year	Yes
Phoenix	2 staff and 2 officers/ Police Department and Juvenile Court	0	No	20-25	City	Juvenile court system maintains records; aggregate with public	Direct city funding	7 nights/week all year	Yes
North Little Rock**	0	0	No	—	None	Police Department; aggregate with public	Curfew ordinance	7 nights/week all year	No
Elk Grove				0-40	None	Police Department		Varies, most curfew sweeps occur during football season and the beginning of the school year	Yes

*Per curfew event on Friday and Saturday nights.

***The police department enforces the curfew ordinance in North Little Rock, but there is no curfew project in place that is structured like the other cities being evaluated.*

Table 2: Juvenile Curfew Ordinances in Six Cities

CITY	AGE (YEARS)	WEEKDAY TIMES	WEEKEND TIMES	DISCRETIONARY PARENTAL FINES *
Camden	Under 18	10 pm-6 am	11 pm-6 am	Up to \$1,000 and/or imprisonment up to 90 days and/or community service up to 100 hours
Denver	Under 18	11 pm-5 am	12 am-5 am	\$125 if diversion program not completed
New Orleans	Under 17	8 pm-6 am September 1-May 31 9 pm-6 am June 1-August 31	11 pm-6 am	Up to \$500 and/or serve 60 hours of community service at discretion of judge and/or imprisonment up to 6 months on 3 rd violation
Jacksonville	Under 18	11 pm-6 am	12 am-6 am	None
Phoenix	15 or under 16 and 17	10 pm-5 am 12 pm-5 am	10 pm-5 am 12 pm-5 am	No fine if diversion program completed; guilty of misdemeanor if not completed
North Little Rock	Under 17	10 pm-6 am	12 am-6 am	None until 3 rd violation
Elk Grove				

**Fines in many of these jurisdictions also apply to proprietors of business establishments who permit a minor to remain on the premises after curfew.*

Table 3: Exceptions to Juvenile Curfew Ordinances in Six Cities

CITY	ADULT ESCORT	INTERSTATE COMMERCE	FIRST AMENDMENT ACTIVITIES	TRAVEL TO AND FROM WORK	EMERGENCY	MARRIED JUVENILE	ATTENDING SCHOOL/ RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES	SIDEWALK BORDERING RESIDENCE
Camden		x		x			x	
Denver	x	x			x		x	x
New Orleans	x	x		x			x	x
Jacksonville	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Phoenix	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
North Little Rock	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Elk Grove								