

2007 PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY – JUNE

INTRODUCTION

Camden City has implemented a number of initiatives geared toward crime prevention. Each has the potential of significantly improving crime suppression, as well as overall quality of life within the city. Robust analysis that gauges the progress of these initiatives, individually, as well as the overall concerted impact that these and other efforts have on the picture of crime in Camden City.

Through Camden's 2007 Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) WRI provides ongoing evaluation and assistance to these key initiatives. In this effort, WRI has focused on four projects: The Camden Safer Cities Initiative (CSCI); the District Council Collaborative Boards (DCCBs); WELCOME New Jersey (Camden Community Connections and STRIVE); and the Camden Curfew Project.

As planned, PSN continues to provide in-depth data analysis for the City's crime suppression initiatives, as well as, process evaluations for the DCCBs and the Curfew Project. We have begun working with WELCOME New Jersey (Camden Community Connections & STRIVE) to identify and disseminate best practices. These analyses and evaluations have enhanced the impact and effectiveness of these initiatives in several key areas.

WORK AND IMPACT SUMMARY

- ❖ Identified quarterly and annual trends in Part I Crime for the years 2000 to the first quarter of 2007, allowing the Camden Police and other criminal justice entities within the city to more effectively assess and focus their efforts.
- ❖ Improved data collection and enhanced operational services at curfew events by creating effective curfew violator forms and volunteer training manuals for the Camden Curfew Project.
- ❖ Increased ability of Curfew Project to identify and track violators in need of social and other services.
- ❖ Improved ability of DCCBs to illustrate the impact their activities have in the community.

CAMDEN SAFER CITIES INITIATIVE

The Camden Safer Cities Initiative (CSCI) is a data-driven problem-solving collaborative that addresses violent crime by creating linkages between the key representatives of the criminal justice community, faith-based organizations, neighborhood representatives, and social service providers to coordinate efforts and improve information sharing. CSCI uses a case processing approach to manage re-entry of violent offenders under supervision by Parole, JJC, and Probation. While funding cuts have significantly constrained CSCI activities; Case Processing meetings as well as Steering Committee meetings have continued to meet monthly (compared to bi-weekly prior to budget reductions). The Research and Evaluation Unit has worked with CSCI leadership to ensure the significant progress that has been made through the case processing meetings continues. The three primary goal of CSCI are to: promote inter-agency collaboration; reduce recidivism among violent offenders; and to improve supervision activities and re-entry services. Through PSN, WRI’s Research and Evaluation Unit has provided the following services:

- Assisting with Steering Committee meetings by providing extensive and timely evaluation.
- Assisting the initiative in working with other crime suppression and data-focused entities through the compilation of data that can be used in discussion with other crime prevention entities.
- Providing reports on quarterly and annual trends in Part I Crime for the years 2000 to 2007 that allowed the Camden Police and other crime prevention entities within the city to more effectively assess and focus their efforts. . Comparing current crime data to historical trends allows for the key stakeholders to better understand current issues and anticipate future crime trends.
- Working with CSCI leadership to identify ways of continuing case processing in light of significant funding cuts, including scaling back certain components, identifying additional potential funding streams and utilizing data to illustrate the positive impacts CSCI has had.

The following represents the specific activities that have led to the above crime data analysis and CSCI program evaluation highlights.

Areas of Evaluation
Data Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created quarterly Part I Crime Analysis reports and presentations. (See Appendix 1) • Provided and will continue to provide bi-monthly status reports for CSCI leadership on clients.
Process Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSN evaluation team attended meetings of the CSCI Steering Committee and the case

processing group and provided recommendations to improve their effectiveness.

- The Research and Evaluation Unit has provided information to assist CSCI leadership in advocating for funding to continue case processing activities. (See Appendix 2)

CAMDEN CITY CURFEW PROJECT

The goal of the Curfew Project is to break the progression to violent crime and gang activity among those youth most at-risk in Camden City. This goal is achieved through a partnership between the community, social services and law enforcement. The project has progressed dramatically since its inception, effectively increasing citywide awareness regarding Camden's curfew ordinance and creating a process for connecting at-risk youth to appropriate services. The Research and Evaluation Unit has assisted in project operations and provided important data collection and analysis, a critical function of the curfew project. To date, the Research and Evaluation Unit has been successful in:

- Improving data collection through updated intake forms and training and development of new forms. As the project has matured, leadership needs different and additional data. This requires updating the various forms necessary to ensure more reliable responses for valuable data analysis. These updated forms also allow for more effective identification of at-risk youth and ensure that an effective and meaningful follow-up process exists.
- Providing information regarding summer employment and recreational opportunities for youth in Camden City. WRI drafted a form for collecting information as well as an information sheet to be given to youth and their families.
- Taking part in the recruitment and training process for the Curfew Project's volunteers as well as creating a tracking form for the number and type of volunteers present at each event.
- Assisting in the hiring of the project coordinator. WRI created the job description and rating scale for candidates in addition to participating in the interview process.
- Assisting in the establishment of the Curfew Project Executive Committee. This committee has been key to moving the project forward. Members are familiar and closely involved in the project and able to steer the project more effectively than the larger, revolving group that meets.
- Providing crucial data analysis and creating and presenting detailed reports to the Steering Committee. These reports have allowed the committee to make informed decisions about targeted outreach to schools and the community and speak to the police and policy makers regarding what can be done to discourage youth from being out after curfew (i.e. late night eateries and restaurants serving youth after curfew).
- Assisting in the establishment of more frequent and regular curfew events.

The following represents the specific activities that have led to the above data analysis and program evaluation highlights.

Areas of Evaluation
Data Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained and updated data for 335 curfew violators into the curfew database. Variables include demographic information, reasons for violating curfew, school attended and relationship to adult picking youth up from center. • Created and updated intake, referral, parent information, follow-up call, and observation forms. (Please see Appendix 3 for updated and new forms) • Drafted a summer opportunity information form detailing the mission and capacity of a number of relevant organizations in the area. (Please see Appendix 4 for summer opportunity information) • Completed an analysis of data collected on youth brought to the curfew center and drafted findings for the Steering Committee. (Please see Appendix 5 for data analysis reports)
Process Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended all Steering Committee meetings and provided feedback. • Targeted outreach to schools as a means of increasing awareness as it pertains to the Curfew Project. (See Appendix 6 for outreach tracking form) • Assisted in the hiring of the project coordinator by creating the job description and candidate rating criteria and participating in interviews. • Developed volunteer training guides for intake and follow-up forms. (Please see Appendix 7 for job description) • Developed progress report on discussion topics, strategies, and processes addressed by the Steering Committee to improve the progress of the project.

WELCOME NJ (CAMDEN COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND STRIVE)

WELCOME NJ is a Camden-based organization whose clientele include at-risk youth and ex-offenders. Project Safe Neighborhoods has been and will continue to provide technical and research and evaluation services to two programs that are operated by WELCOME NJ. Both Camden Community Connections (CCC) and STRIVE are employment-based programs, aimed at the at-risk youth and adult offender populations, respectively. The intervention strategies employed have as their mission the reduction of recidivism in the populations they serve.

In order to provide efficient technical assistance for Welcome NJ, the Walter Rand Institute recently met with director, Martha Chavis to develop a work plan for technical and research assistance. It was determined that WRI could assist with three major tasks within the two aforementioned programs:

- Create and/or provide CCC and STRIVE/Camden with database information for assessment of program activities as a cost savings initiative. The cost of implementing STRIVE (the cost per successful participant) combined with the benefits of a viable member of the workforce will be set against the potential cost to governmental agencies and programs. WRI has begun researching the potential costs of
- Assess the STRIVE program as well as research into similar existing programs for the identification of best practices of programs that prescribe to the intervention through employment model. WRI has recently begun a review of existing programs to identify existing practices.
- Provide technical assistance for the creation of data reports for both STRIVE and Camden Community Connections, with focus on the presentation of data within these reports.

Areas of Evaluation
Data Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed data presentations from past reports. • Reviewed data from other STRIVE program reports.
Program Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researched cost-benefit information for comparative data analysis. • Researched existing employment as intervention programs for comparison and identification of best practices.

CAMDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL COLLABORATIVE BOARDS

The District Council Collaborative Boards (DCCBs) were created based on recommendations set forth by Camden’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Law Enforcement. The Boards are designed to assist in improving public safety and overall quality of life in the city by creating a real community-police partnership on the ground in Camden. The DCCBs provide regular interaction between police commanders assigned to particular districts and community leaders in those districts. Among the tasks identified by the DCCBs are assessing areas of concern for each district, creating a directory of district resources and maintaining demographic and other information for districts. The overarching goal set forth by the DCCBs is to ensure that the community is equipped to fulfill its essential role in improving public safety and the overall quality of life for Camden City’s residents. PSN has assisted the DCCBs in the following ways:

- Assisting in the organization and leading the first citywide DCCB retreat. Over the course of two days, WRI staff led working sessions, created a report on the decisions and actionable items discussed and created and analyzed an evaluation for DCCB members to rate the success of the retreat. (Please see Appendix 10 for the report and evaluation)

- Attending general meetings and officer meetings and providing leadership with feedback and suggestions for conducting meetings.
- Assisting in identifying the necessary components to the DCCB binders intended for use in providing detailed documentation of DCCB composition, district demographics and accomplishments of the boards.
- Conducted a detailed comparative analysis examining similar working groups in other areas of the country.
- The creation and upkeep of demographic maps for each of the four districts represented by the District Council Collaborative Boards.

The following represents the specific activities that have led to the above data analysis and program evaluation highlights.

Areas of Evaluation
Data Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzed similar working groups in other urban areas. • Created demographic maps for the four districts represented by the DCCBs. (See Appendix 8)
Process Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created the DCCB retreat evaluation form and processed this information in drafting a retreat summary comprised of the action items addressed. (See Appendices 9 and 10) • Developed the event tracking form. (See appendix 11) • Identified the pertinent documentation for the DCCB binders. • Drafted board member, community organization information sheets and a contact information form to track community outreach and capture necessary information on parties interested in becoming active with DCCBs. (See Appendix 12 for forms)