



# Program Evaluation

## Summary

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### Community policing in Chicago

# The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS): Year Ten

By the Chicago Community Policing Evaluation Consortium\*

This is the eighth report on Chicago's community policing program. The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) was inaugurated in April 1993. After experimenting in five police districts, the program was expanded to encompass the entire city. Part of the plan was to renew the Police Department's turf orientation, so teams of officers now have relatively long-term assignments in each of the city's 279 police beats. The entire Department has been trained in problem-solving following the CAPS five-

step process focusing on victims, offenders and the locations of crime. The problem-solving efforts of beat officers are supported by a coordinated system for delivering city services. The program's commitment to community involvement is reflected in beat meetings and district advisory committees. Monthly beat meetings were first held in the experimental districts and became a regular feature of the program early in 1995. Each police district has an advisory council. Beginning in 1996, the city mounted a substantial civic education effort to support CAPS. Television and radio programs, billboards, videos, brochures, mailings, festival booths, and district and citywide rallies were targeted at promoting awareness of CAPS and involvement in its activities.



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*The full 2002 report, "Community Policing in Chicago, Year Ten," and copies of earlier reports can be found at the Institute for Policy Research website ([www.Northwestern.edu/IPR/policing.html](http://www.Northwestern.edu/IPR/policing.html)) or they can be requested from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.*

In 1993, the city created the CAPS Implementation Office. Its staff is composed of civilian community outreach workers, some formerly employed by non-profit community organizations, who are charged with assisting beat and district projects and sustaining participation in beat community meetings. The Implementation Office also supports court advocacy activities in every police district, and it has taken over coordinating city services in support of CAPS-related projects. In addition, city attorneys work in the districts on gang- and drug-house issues, and police officers have joined multi-agency teams that conduct strategically targeted code-violation inspections.

This report examines CAPS progress through the end of 2003, more than ten years after its inception. The first section summarizes what we have learned about citizen involvement in the program, through an analysis of beat meetings and district advisory committees. The next section describes changes over time in Chicagoans' assessments of the quality of police service. There is a description of trends in crime and fear in Chicago's neighborhoods, followed by a long section describing CAPS problem-solving efforts and trends in neighborhood problems. The report concludes with an in-depth look at conditions in the Latino community.

This is an abbreviated version of a much longer evaluation report, also titled "CAPS at Ten." The full report also includes a section on Chicago's management accountability program. The longer version is available on request from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and at our website: [www.northwestern.edu/IPR/publications/policing.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/IPR/publications/policing.html)

### Public Involvement

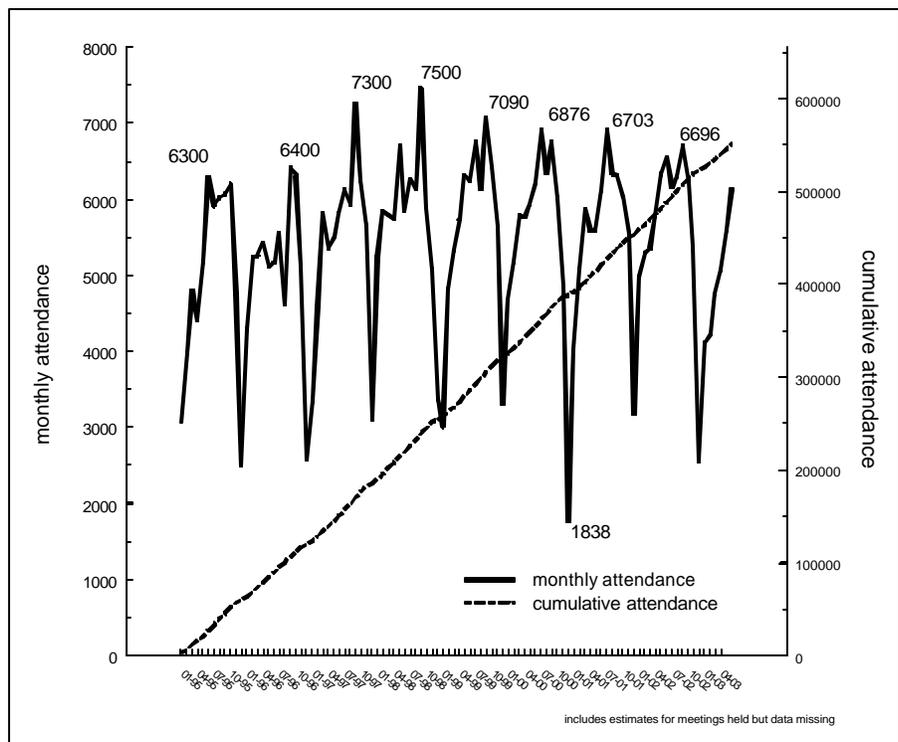
Our yearly surveys find that awareness of CAPS grew swiftly between 1996 and 1998. Awareness of the program among whites has since hovered at about 80 percent, while it has continued to grow a bit among African-Americans. By 2003, 89 percent of African-Americans knew about CAPS. Awareness

grew more slowly among Latinos, and it has been dropping since hitting its peak of 73 percent in 1999. In 2003, only 56 percent of Latinos preferring to speak Spanish knew about the program.

Television is the most common source of information about CAPS. In 1999, 70 percent of Spanish-speaking Latinos who knew about CAPS indicated that they had learned about it at least in part via television. The second most frequent way people recall hearing about CAPS is word of mouth, including from a neighbor or friend; the "buzz" surrounding CAPS has risen every year. Spanish-speaking Latinos were the least likely to report hearing about CAPS from other people. Over time there has been a noticeable increase in the extent to which people report receiving printed matter (brochures, flyers and newsletters) and seeing posters or signs about CAPS.

Participation in beat meetings has been rising slightly. In 1995, Chicagoans attended beat meetings on about 58,600 occasions. During 2002 (the last year for which complete information is available), 67,300 people attended a total of 2,916 beat meetings. Adding together all of the meetings between 1995 and June of 2003, Chicagoans have turned up 551,700 times for beat meetings. In the surveys, awareness of the

**Figure 1**  
Trends in beat meeting attendance



**Table 1**  
**Components of a model meeting**

<i>Clear Agenda</i>	Was there a printed or verbal agenda for the meeting?	<i>Resident Feedback</i>	Did residents report back on previous problem-solving efforts?
<i>Information Shared</i>	Were crime maps or crime reports handed out?	<i>Officer Feedback</i>	Did police officers report back on previous problem-solving efforts?
<i>Civilian Leadership</i>	Was there a civilian facilitator for the meeting?	<i>Problems Identified</i>	Were problems or issues identified at the meeting?
<i>Volunteers Encouraged</i>	Were volunteers called for or sign-up sheets passed around?	<i>Solutions Identified</i>	Were solutions proposed for the problems that were identified?
<i>Action Component</i>	Did residents leave the meeting with a commitment to future action?	<i>Meeting Effectiveness</i>	Rating of the overall effectiveness with which the meeting was run.

meetings has been surprisingly stable, holding steady at 60 percent of adults. Homeowners, long-term residents, older adults and those with more education are more likely to know beat meetings are being held in their neighborhood. Awareness among African-Americans has consistently outpaced every other group, while it is lowest for Spanish-speaking Latinos. Figure 1 charts beat meeting attendance since 1995.

Two factors are particularly important in sustaining beat meeting attendance. One is the role played by community associations and local institutions in getting the word out and encouraging residents to attend; CAPS is significantly affected by the infrastructure of organizations in each neighborhood. The other is the special role played by a relatively small cadre of dedicated beat-meeting activists. They come to meetings frequently, and their involvement drives both attendance rates and CAPS-related neighborhood activism.

At the beat level, attendance is generally highest where it is needed most. Attendance rates are especially high in poor areas with substandard housing, high levels of crime and poor schools. Meeting attendance is highest there because it is driven by concern about crime and other neighborhood problems; beat meetings give people a place to go to do something about it.

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The CAPS evaluation has examined trends in the quality of beat meetings. Table 1 presents some of the meeting elements we analyzed. Based on observational studies in 1995, 1998 and 2002, the meetings have improved on a number of important dimensions. The adoption of clear procedures, model agendas, informative materials to be distributed, training for officers and beat facilitators, special training for beat sergeants, and internal inspections, have increased the quality of beat meetings and standardized their operations.

In 2002 we observed noticeably fewer very poorly run meetings. However, at the same time, beat meetings have gotten dramatically shorter, with fewer police officers attending, and their effectiveness at mobilizing residents for action appears to be declining. Satisfaction with meetings among attendees peaked in 1998 and has since been declining. Over time, fewer participants report that they have seen action taken in their neighborhood because of the meetings or that beat meetings are very useful for finding solutions to neighborhood problems. Beat meetings are also not particularly representative of the community. Attendance is strongly biased in favor of more educated residents, homeowners, and older long-term residents. Latinos are dramatically underrepresented in most neighborhoods.

One important feature of beat meetings is they convene frequently, regularly and in the same place, thus

providing Chicagoans with widespread opportunities to participate. Beat meetings also work because someone is always responsible for organizing and conducting them, and they continue to be held even through periods of low attendance. Residents attend meetings hoping to be able to speak freely and get home safely, but in about 20 percent of beats there is concern about getting involved because residents fear retaliation by bad elements in the community.

One reason residents attend is that they are concerned about their community but are not well informed about crime or the efforts being made by police and local activists to respond to it. Beat meetings are an effective means for sharing information about the community, and there has been substantial improvement in reports by police to residents about what they have done about concerns expressed at the meetings. The meetings could also provide a venue for residents to report on their own efforts, but often this is not the case, and only about one-quarter of the meetings seemed to have any action component to them. A payoff of attending is seeing problems written up as CAPS service requests, but it appears that the police have virtually abandoned using these forms. This may be undermining one of the central reasons Chicagoans come to the meetings – to get something done.

Another vehicle for resident involvement in CAPS are the district advisory committees. Known widely as “DACs,” these are groups of residents, community organization leaders, business owners, representatives of local institutions and others from the community who meet regularly with the commander and other police district leaders to discuss local affairs. DAC members are supposed to assist the commander in establishing district priorities and developing strategies to address them, as well as to bring to the table community resources that could contribute to resolving local problems. However, many members express frustration over the committees’ ill-defined mandate, their leadership problems and their inaction on many important issues. Many DACs have found it difficult to translate the general mission defined for them in Department plans into a useful mission in practice. Some committees focus on local and specific issues that should be handled at a lower level, and essentially they merely provide another layer of beat meetings. While they are supposed to encourage the exchange of information, too many DAC meetings are dominated by the one-way flow of announcements by the police

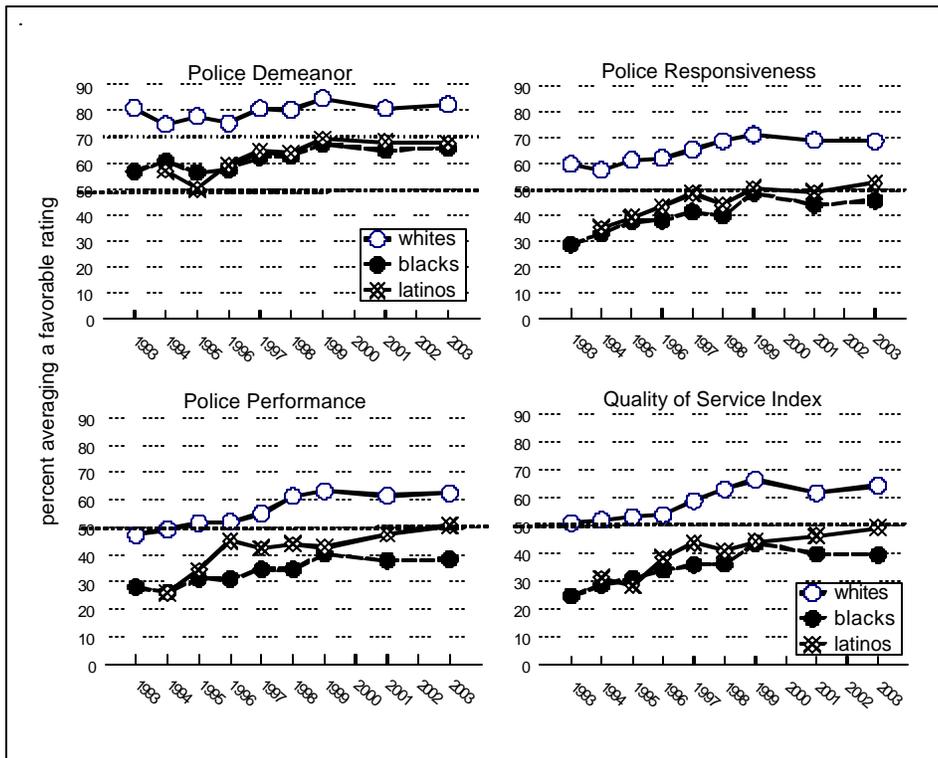
to those in attendance. In theory the Department’s internal process for planning district strategies and assessing their effectiveness involves the chair of the DAC, who is supposed to represent the community’s interests and priorities, and its view of the effectiveness of police operations. However, it is virtually unheard of for DAC chairs to play any role whatsoever at the planning stage, and we have never observed a DAC chair making a significant contribution to discussions at accountability meetings at any level.

The DACs are often not very representative of the community. Officially, they are supposed to “. . . reflect the district’s social, ethnic and racial make-up, and include residents, youth, business people, representatives of community educational and religious organizations, and other stakeholders in the district.” However, our research indicates that the membership of many DACs falls short of these goals. Many are also not providing an independent voice for the community; most simply respond to the agenda put on the table by commanders or their community policing office, and they get more advice than they give. DAC membership is also very slow to turn over. Many members hang on for years, some doing so regardless of their productivity as members. They seem to enjoy their status and the seeming “insider” nature of the commander’s reports to the group. The lack of turnover in some DACs may exacerbate the representation issues facing the DACs, especially their inability to find slots for the city’s large and growing Latino population.

## Public Confidence in the Police

One goal of CAPS is to increase public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the police. Our evaluation surveys find that opinions about the police improved steadily between 1993 and 1999, before leveling off at a new high in the 2000s. At the same time, it is also apparent that the gulf between the races in Chicago has not diminished at all. Partly this is good news, for it signals that improvement in the image of the police has not been confined to only one group. On every measure, changes in opinion have been apparent among whites, African-Americans and Latinos alike. But on every dimension, the 15 to 20 percentage point gap between the views of whites and those of other racial groups scarcely narrowed at all over the 11-year period during which the evaluation monitored views of the public. Chicagoans are more content with their

Figure 2  
Trends in confidence in the police



police than they were a decade ago, but they remain polarized in their views.

Figure 2 charts progress on three aspects of public opinion about the police. Chicago police have always done best in terms of their perceived demeanor: their politeness, helpfulness and fairness, and in the concern they show for residents' problems. Even in 1993, a large majority of Chicagoans believed that people in their neighborhood were treated well by the police, so there was not much room for improvement on this measure. Over the years there has been a big increase in the percentage who see police in their area as dealing with the problems that concern residents and working with residents to solve them (responsiveness), both goals of CAPS. Police have done least well on questions about their performance, including how effective they are at controlling crime, maintaining order and (especially) helping victims. Figure 2 also includes a chart summarizing all of these trends, and it illustrates that Chicago police still have a way to go. Even in 2003, fewer than half the Latinos and African-Americans interviewed gave them a positive rating on many of these questions.

### Trends in Crime and Fear

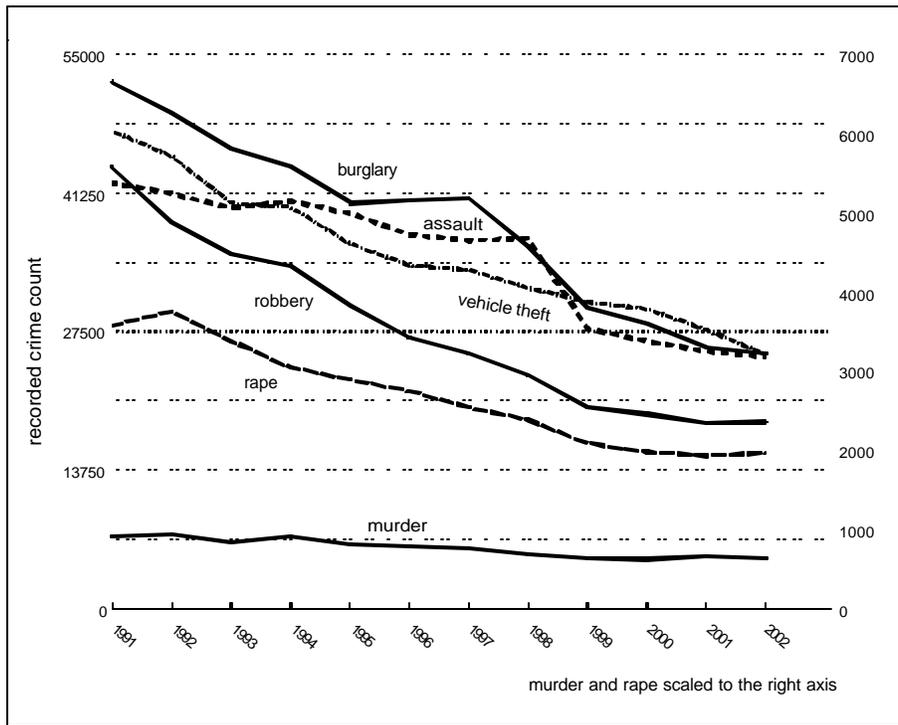
In Chicago, many categories of crime peaked in 1991 and then declined sharply. Over the 1991-2002 period, violent crime declined by 49 percent, and property crime by 36 percent. Figure 3 illustrates these trends. The largest decline in crime was for robbery, which dropped by 58 percent between 1991 and 2002. Murder was least down over this period, by 30 percent. Like in many cities, the ability of Chicago's police to solve homicides has waned. While other kinds of homicide have declined, the remaining core of gang- and drug-related shootings has proven more difficult to counter. Over the period, rapes declined by 45 percent,

and aggravated assault and battery by 41 percent. In the property-crime category, motor-vehicle theft was down 47 percent between 1991 and 2002. Burglary, which typically involves break-ins of businesses, homes or garages, went down 51 percent. Residential and garage burglary dropped 46 percent. Simple property thefts declined 27 percent over the same period.

Compared to other large American cities, Chicago did fairly well. In general, the drop in crime paralleled trends in other big cities, and they were deeper than some. In terms of robbery, Chicago compares favorably with the bulk of its peer communities. The city lagged in homicide. Since 1991, big-city murder has gone down quickly, ending at exactly half of its original level by 2002. This contrasts with Chicago's one-third decline, to 67 percent of its 1991 number. Chicago essentially matched the very substantial declines that took place in big-city burglary and auto theft during the course of the 1990s.

We also examined why crime has declined so substantially. Factors such as improving neighborhood condi-

**Figure 3**  
Trends in crime in Chicago



tions, decreasing availability of guns, changing drug markets, changes in police effectiveness, and the growing capacity of the city’s neighborhoods to defend themselves, all are linked to the declining level of violence in the city. Crime has declined in almost all beats, but it has dropped most dramatically in African-American communities. Crime rates have declined least in predominately white areas, where they were not very high at the outset.

The surveys also included questions about the extent of neighborhood crime problems, and findings point to the unique experiences of the city’s large and growing Latino population. In the early 1990s, African-Americans and Latinos were equally concerned about crime in their neighborhood, but during the course of the 1990s their experiences diverged. Over time, increasing numbers of African-Americans reported that things were improving, and by 2003 their views about many problems had verged toward those of whites. But there was little good news for the city’s Latinos. Concerns of Latinos did not decline during the 1990s, and they jumped to new highs during the early 2000s. By 2003, Latinos were three times more likely than whites or

African-Americans to report that street crime, burglary and auto theft were big problems in their community.

The evaluation surveys also examine trends in fear of crime. Fear of crime is an important social factor with real consequences for individuals, neighborhoods and metropolitan areas.

In this light, the finding that there is a substantial decline in fear bodes well for the city’s future. As shown in Figure 4, fear was down 20 percentage points or so among Chicago’s highest fear groups – African-Americans, women and older residents. Latinos made the fewest gains, especially if they were Spanish- rather than English-speakers. Because Spanish-speakers are the fastest growing component of the city’s Latino population, there was little

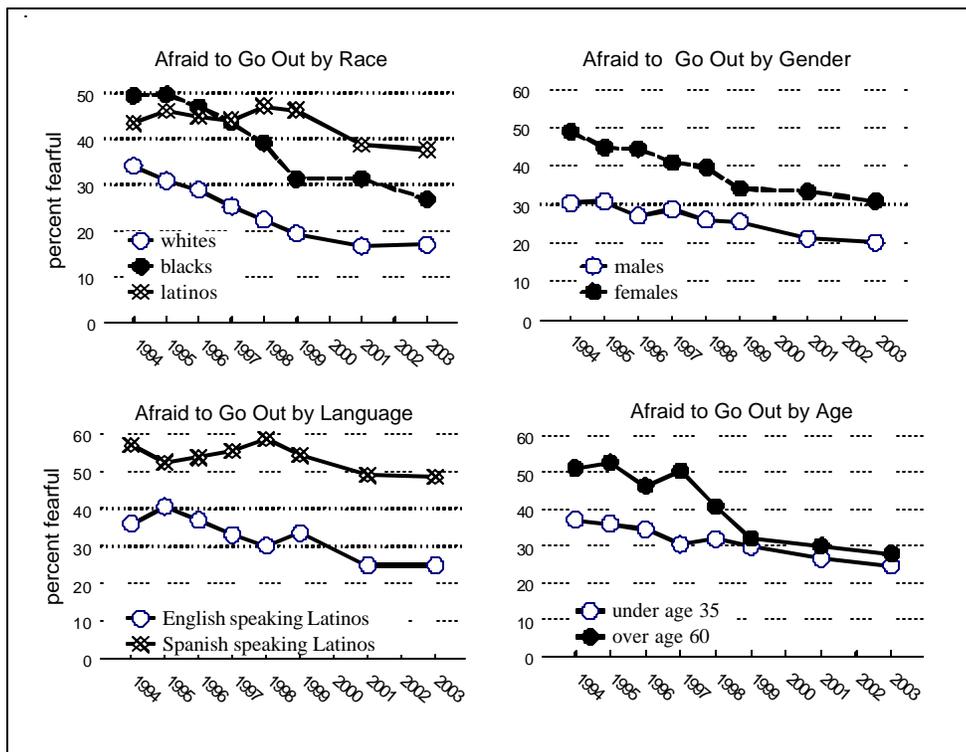
progress for the group as a whole.

### Tackling Neighborhood Problems

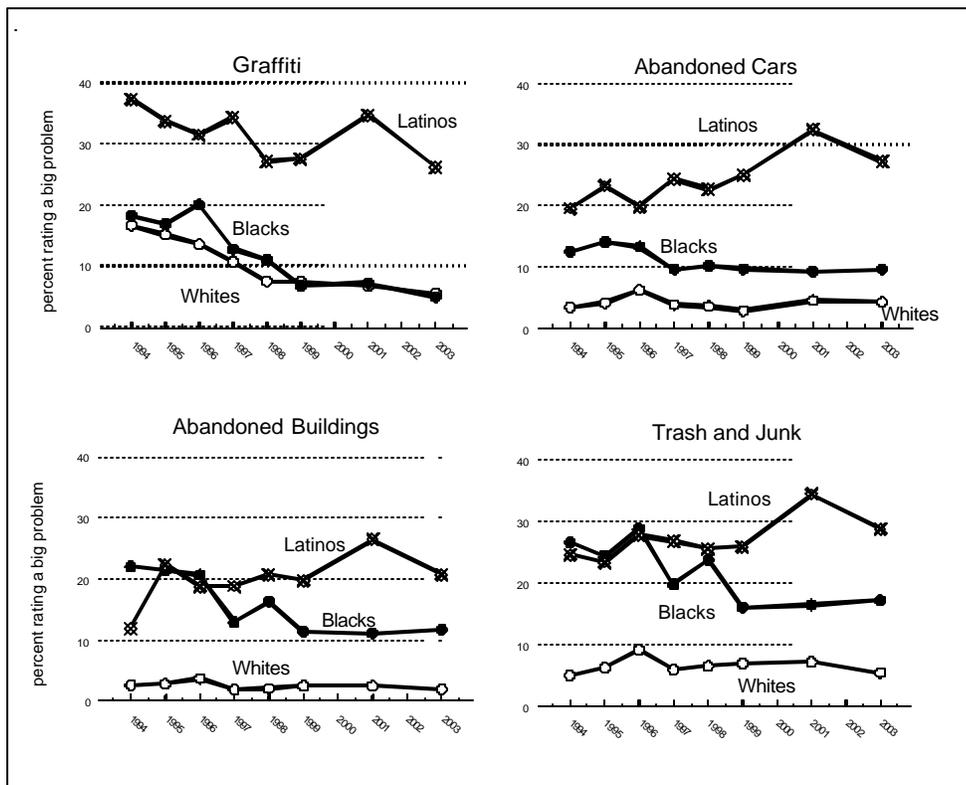
The evaluation also tracks trends in the extent of neighborhood problems, and in resident involvement in problem-solving. The surveys asked about neighborhood conditions using categories that are readily understood by the public, and they included many concerns that are not easily gauged using agency statistics. All of the problems considered were targets of problem-solving projects and city service agencies. We surveyed beat meeting participants to determine how often they get involved in CAPS-related activities.

Figure 5 charts trends in the percentage of Chicagoans who reported that physical decay is a big problem in their neighborhood. In general, whites began with few serious concerns about physical decay issues, and things did not change much for them. African-Americans began with many serious problems, but they reported substantial improvements in neighborhood conditions over time. Concern about abandoned buildings dropped by half, and concern about refuse-filled lots and graffiti declined by about 10 percentage

**Figure 4**  
Trends in fear by race, age, gender and language



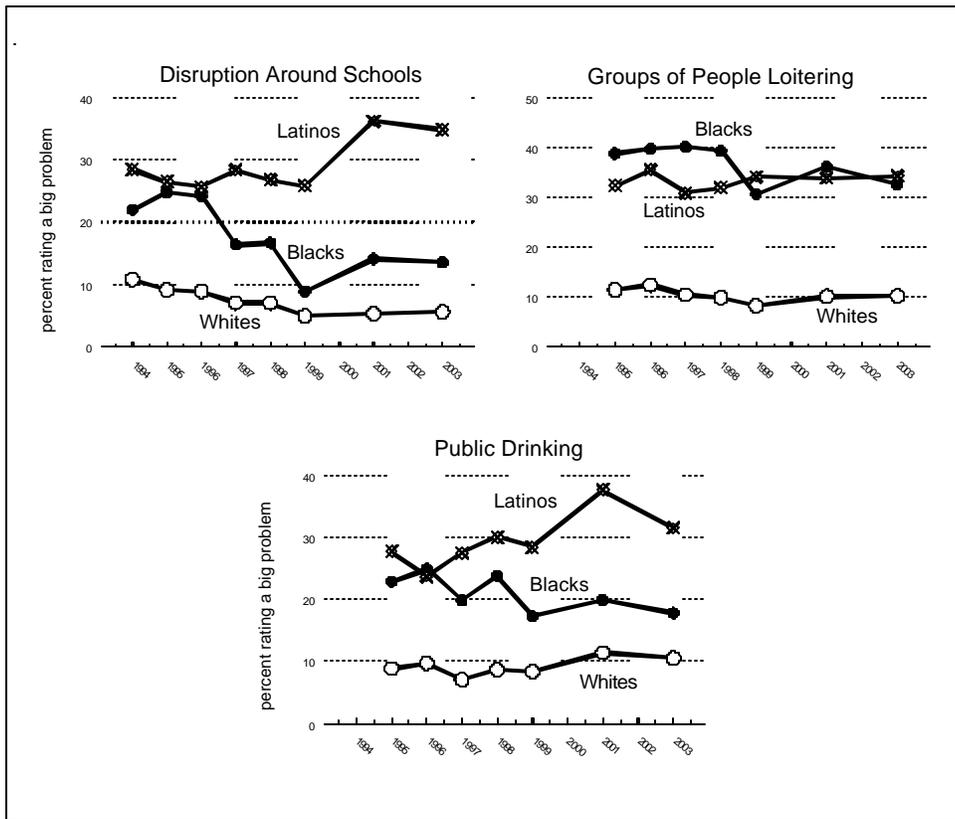
**Figure 5**  
Trends in physical decay problems



points. The city's Latinos, on the other hand, began with serious problems and saw little improvement over the course of a decade. By 2003, it was whites and African-Americans who were most in agreement about improvements in their neighborhoods – although blacks certainly still had a way to go before they could claim parity. Nothing improved for Latinos, and in their eyes some problems even grew worse.

The social disorder category includes public drinking, loitering, and disturbances in and around schools. Few white Chicagoans reported serious disorder problems in the early 1990s, but over the ensuing decade they managed to witness a significant improvement in school-related problems. Big improvements in neighborhood order were registered by African-Americans. The percentage of African-Americans expressing concern about disruption in and around schools dropped, and concern about public drinking was down. On the other hand, Latinos saw few gains over the period. In the early years African-Americans and Latinos reported about the same level of concern about social disorder, but the experiences of the two groups again diverged dramatically. Latinos reported deteriorating conditions in and around the

**Figure 6**  
Trends in social disorder



schools serving their neighborhoods, and concern about public drinking jumped considerably.

What are residents doing to respond to these and other problems? In 2002 we surveyed thousands of beat meeting participants to find out. Their activities fell into two distinct clusters. One was a set of aggressive, “in your face” activities. They included marches, prayer vigils, smoke-outs, positive loitering, parent patrols and neighborhood watch. Marches and rallies were the most frequent activities in this category. Twelve percent of those attending beat meetings that summer participated in smoke-outs, CAPS picnics or barbecues; these events are frequently held in prostitution strolls or areas with active street drug markets. Involvement in walking school buses was less common, but neighborhood watches or patrols were surprisingly popular, mentioned by 21 percent of those attending. Overall, 43 percent of those attending beat meetings were involved in at least one of these efforts.

The other set of activities included attending neighborhood assemblies, being a court advocate, working on liquor control projects, and organizing neighborhood groups. Eleven percent of those attending had some involvement in court advocacy. “Contacting police or elected officials about a problem,” which is a fairly passive form of involvement, was the most frequent activity in the survey, at 39 percent. Overall, 53 percent of those attending beat meetings in the summer of 2002 were involved in at least one of those activities.

A very significant issue is whether CAPS activism is concentrated where it is needed most. Our survey found that activism is more common in less well-off, higher-crime beats with

serious drug problems. Like beat meeting participation, both aggressive activism and involvement in CAPS neighborhood projects are more common in troubled areas.

### Trends in the Latino Community

During the summer of 2003, the CAPS evaluation team conducted an in-depth study of Latino involvement in community policing. Many of the issues that led to this study have already been described in this report, including high levels of fear and perceived crime among Latinos, as well as their concerns about the extent of social disorder and physical decay in their communities. At the same time, Latinos are generally underrepresented in CAPS. Latinos are least aware of the program and of beat meetings, and their awareness has been falling since the late 1990s. Involvement in beat meetings is driven by concern about crime and disorder, but Latinos do not turn out in expected numbers. They are particularly underrepresented at beat meetings in racially diverse areas, and the His-

panic community lacks representation by the loyal participants who keep coming back again once they do attend beat meetings. Latinos are also underrepresented on the District Advisory Committees that meet regularly with police commanders, despite the fact that committee members are appointed by the Police Department. Demography works against them in this regard. Compared to whites and African-Americans, Latinos are younger and more likely to be working and have children at home, and least likely to be linked to their community through the organizational affiliations that promote involvement in CAPS. Their relations with the police are mixed, and they are noticeably more critical of them than are the city's white residents. There is also evidence that they are avoiding contact with the police, including not reporting crimes when they occur. This implies that police reports do not fully describe the level of crime in predominantly Latino beats. And in virtually every instance all of these problems interact with language. Members of the city's large and growing Spanish-language community report more neighborhood problems, fewer contacts with the police, lower levels of CAPS awareness and involvement, and higher levels of fear than do their English-speaking counterparts.

These issues take on special significance because of the enormous growth in the city's Latino population. Latinos began to make their mark on Chicago during the 1980s, and by 2000 they totaled almost 754,000. Like African-Americans in an earlier era, the Latino community is fed by an immigrant stream that is helping drive up their numbers. The newcomers are principally from Mexico: in 1990, 65 percent of the city's Latinos were of Mexican origin; by 2000 it was 70 percent. Puerto Rican migration to Chicago began later, and the proportion of Puerto Ricans in the city declined between 1990 and 2000, from 22 percent of the Latino total to 15 percent. The fraction of those of Cuban origin remained in the 1 to 2 percent range, and the remainder came from a variety of points in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

**Members of the city's large and growing Spanish-language community report more neighborhood problems, fewer contacts with the police, lower levels of CAPS awareness and involvement, and higher levels of fear than do their English-speaking counterparts.**

In order to learn more about these issues and the perspectives of residents on how to respond to them, we selected a sample of police beats for more intensive study. Eight beats in Pilsen and Little Village were chosen because they are notable "ports of entry" for recent immigrants. Seven predominately Latino beats on the north side were chosen to represent longer-term residents who are more likely to be native-born American citizens, to speak English and to feel integrated into the city's economic and political fabric.

In terms of their relationship with the police, our informants identified three trouble topics: immigration, police attitudes and behavior regarding neighborhood residents, and police relations with area youths. Three issues closely associated with immigration affected their views. First, newcomers reportedly arrive with two expectations about the police that are rooted in their home-

country experience – that the police are corrupt and abusive. As Figure 7 indicates, our survey data tell the same story. Spanish-speaking Latinos are vastly more likely than anyone else to believe that police in their neighborhood use excessive force and are corrupt. In our 2003 survey, 33 percent of them reported police corruption was a big problem in their neighborhood, and another 19 percent thought it was at least some problem. A second immigration issue is that, once here, newcomers face language and communication problems when they deal with the police. Third, fears about their legal status – some of which may be unfounded – lead immigrants to avoid contact with police, to not report crime and to remain uninvolved in CAPS. Another issue that arose in the interviews was police demeanor. Many informants indicated that officers serving in their area are sometimes rude or unresponsive to the concerns of residents. A group with whom police apparently have difficult relations is Latino youths, and especially young males. Our surveys document that they are stopped by the police with high frequency, and too often they feel mistreated.

People we questioned about CAPS recommended specifically targeting Spanish-speaking Latinos

through Spanish-language television and radio. They stressed that police should target Latinos where they live, work and play; flyers should be distributed in grocery stores, community organizations, schools and churches. There was agreement that personal contact is important to Latinos; printed materials do not have the same impact, and will not counteract the negative experiences Latinos have had with police. Much work is needed to break down stereotypes on both sides. Police and Latinos often meet in adverse situations, so opportunities need to be created for interactions of a more positive nature, where both can meet in a friendly and supportive environment and trust can be reestablished. Police need to develop partnerships with community organizations. In particular, efforts involving schools and churches need to be broadened, and officers need to work with key organizations and community leaders to bring more residents into the CAPS process. Beat meetings need more consistent Spanish-language translation, and bilingual officers. Other recommendations are relevant to all beat meetings. They include facilitating problem-solving at meetings; seeing and reporting positive results of CAPS; keeping residents informed; and making meetings convenient for attendees. On their part, the Latino community must also take action. CAPS is a partnership and both sides must be active in order for the program to work. CAPS needs to be publicized by Latinos; they must continue to spread the word of its utility among family and friends, and explain why it should be a priority. They need to use their personal relationships to strengthen participation. Residents also need to be aware that CAPS is a process that takes time and patience, for complex problems do not have quick fixes. They need to come to meetings prepared to engage in problem-solving rather than voicing their problem and expecting something to be done about it.

**CAPS at Ten: A Final Grade**

We have been monitoring Chicago’s community policing initiative since January 1993, before the program was even announced to the public. The evaluation was

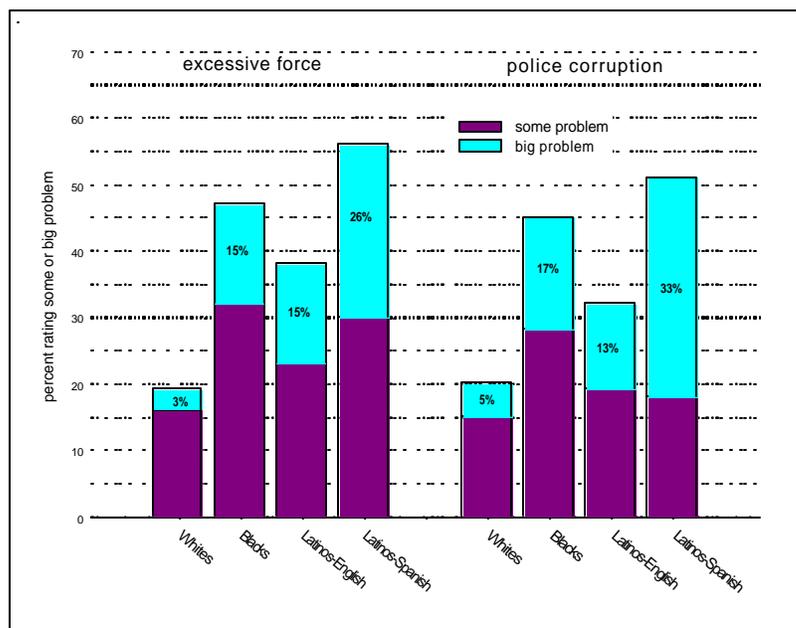
**Beat meetings need more consistent Spanish-language translation, and bilingual officers.**

designed to encompass the entire city and all of its communities, and as a result we have gathered a great deal of data. Since the beginning we have surveyed about 48,500 residents, about two-thirds of them at home and one-third at beat meetings. Several thousand of them were

CAPS activists and DAC members, and another 5,000 were being trained in problem-solving. We also surveyed about 13,600 police officers, either at roll call or when they gathered for training sessions or beat meetings. Over the years we also conducted more than 1,000 in-depth personal interviews of police and residents. We sent observers to conduct detailed observations of 1,079 beat meetings. Our computers store more than 8 million crime reports and almost 37 million records of 911 calls (and that is only since 1999). More than 65 people have worked on the evaluation project.

We have been impressed by several things during the course of the evaluation. Perhaps the most important is the dynamism of the city. Its people and their problems do not stand still, and our data collection has documented seismic shifts in both just since the early 1990s. Wherever big city policing is headed, Chicago is at the forefront. Another key factor is the sheer

**Figure 7**  
Perceptions of police corruption and excessive force



difficulty of mounting any significant project in a city the size of Chicago. Because it requires the commitment of neighborhood residents, the police, and their many agency partners, the task of making all of the many programs that make up CAPS come together in coordinated fashion is huge. An important point affecting everything that has happened is that CAPS is not the Police Department's program; rather, it is the city's program. This is not true in most places, and community policing is vulnerable in many cities because of it. Here, every city agency pitches in, and the personal involvement of hundreds of thousands of citizens ensures that community policing is deeply embedded in the civic and political life of the city. This is important because there are distracting pressures on the city's leaders. Concern about terrorism is real, although what this city can do about it is not clear. And recent attention to violent crime has taken its share of energy that could have been directed at responding to some of the program's weak spots. Finally, the Chicago Police Department is to be commended for its unwavering cooperation and interest in the evaluation over the past decade. Our evaluators were afforded broad access to the Department's documents, meetings and personnel. In addition, the CPD has been open to feedback, using evaluation findings to make enhancements to CAPS and to change Department policies and procedures to better support CAPS.

Because CAPS is a sprawling collection of agencies and projects, we are giving its various parts separate ratings. Like graders everywhere, we tend to give a little extra for effort, and we recognize that some tests are harder than others. We also kept an eye on how other cities have done while making these judgments.

**Public Involvement:** This is one of the defining elements of community policing. Chicago's beat meetings are unique and the subject of intense scrutiny from around the world. Residents continue to turn out in large numbers, so they see something in it for their community, and in many ways the meetings have improved over time. That notwithstanding, several issues that have plagued CAPS for years have not been effectively addressed. The first is the limited (and apparently declining) action component of beat meetings. As one community policing sergeant put it,

**In Chicago, CAPS is the city's program, and every relevant agency is making an effort to support problem-solving at the beat and district level.**

"A lot of residents think that CAPS is like a laundry. Drop off the shirts, come back in a week and they are done." Another issue is the rudderless drifting of too many District Advisory Committees; they need new blood and a clear role. The turnover in officers attending the meetings continues to defeat one of the purposes of holding them, which is to build relationships between police and the public. We also found that the issues raised at beat meetings are not very well represented in the paperwork that officers later file, so no one above the beat level can monitor what citizens are really concerned about and what is being done about it. **Grade: B**

**Agency Partnerships:** Agency partnerships are another key feature of an effective program. In cities where community policing is the police department's program there isn't much partnering going on. There, police and residents typically address only a narrow range of issues, not the broad range of problems that CAPS has taken on. In Chicago, CAPS is the city's program,

and every relevant agency is making an effort to support problem-solving at the beat and district level. The CAPS Implementation Office provides the inter-agency coordination that is required to address the most significant problems. Past reports have documented the effectiveness of the city's anti-graffiti program. The city attorney's office and a multi-agency inspection task force support district efforts to deal with bad buildings. **Grade: A**

**Reorganization:** Chicago also effectively reorganized to support community policing. The daily work of thousands of patrol officers was reshuffled so that newly formed beat teams could concentrate on their assigned neighborhoods, and a sergeant is assigned to generally supervise their problem-solving activities. A very smart management move concentrated responsibility for all aspects of CAPS management in the hands of a district lieutenant, the "CAPS management team leader." District community policing offices have taken on a lot more work. The management accountability system set in place in 2000, coupled with the newer deployment operations center, has shifted the focus of headquarters to day-to-day crime fighting. This seems to happen everywhere when agencies adopt New York-style "Compstat" systems, but the focus of Chicago's

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management accountability process has remained broader than most. The headquarters review sessions continue to put some pressure on the districts to respond to the public's concerns, coordinate with the mobilization efforts of the CAPS Implementation Office, and sustain attendance at beat meetings. Internal inspectors routinely review community policing aspects of the Department's operations.

**Grade: A**

**Problem-solving:** CAPS gets its lowest grade for problem-solving. To be fair, every agency has trouble making problem-solving work: it requires a great deal of training, close supervision, strong analytic capacity, and organization-wide commitment. An analysis of hundreds of beat-level plans (the study was detailed in our January 2003 report) found that efforts to solve local priority problems have not been very effective. District-level priorities get more sustained attention, but the same problems, in about the same locations, persist year after year. Over time the effectiveness of

beat meetings in setting problem-solving agendas for the public has declined. Officers have had no refresher training in problem-solving, and most of a decade has passed since resident activists were offered any training opportunities. Refocusing on problem-solving could provide an opportunity to re-engage the community in the active partnership promised by CAPS.

**Grade: C**



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