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On Good Authority is a periodic briefing on trends and issues in criminal justice. This report was written by staff Research Analyst Karen Levy McCanna. It is the first in a series of four summaries highlighting the most recent program evaluation of the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy. The evaluation was conducted by the Chicago Community Policing Evaluation Consortium, coordinated by the Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University. Copies of the evaluation are available from the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit.

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Community policing in Chicago: an evaluation

The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) began in April 1993 and was tested in five police districts before being implemented in 279 beats throughout the city. A team of officers are assigned to each beat and are directed to utilize problem-solving strategies in the community when answering calls for service and on their own initiative. Rapid response units are assigned excess or low-priority calls to support beat officers.

Advisory committees consult with police on their beat and district plans. Problems, and resources available to address them, are identified in targeted areas. The process results in a plan of coordinated efforts between police and residents to reduce crime. In addition, Chicago's Office of Emergency Communications uses a computerized dispatching system to handle police and fire calls, while bureau and interagency task forces work to enforce city ordinances. Also, the corporation counsel's office focuses on problems created by suspected drug houses and negligent landlords in the community.

In December 1997, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority funded, in part, the fifth year of the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy evaluation. In conjunction with funding from the National Institute of Justice and the John D. and Catherine T. Mac Arthur Foundation, the Chicago Community Policing Evaluation Consortium continued their analysis of community policing in Chicago. The evaluation report, "Community Policing in Chicago, Years

Five and Six: An Interim Report," encompasses issues of citywide implementation, community involvement, and other support initiatives.

The fifth year of evaluation utilized a number of data collection methods. A citywide survey was completed and interviews were conducted with police personnel and community members. Field observations occurred and questionnaires were completed by beat meeting participants. The data collected were combined to provide an in-depth look at the evolution of CAPS.

Citizen involvement

Citizens' recognition of CAPS has grown with the program. Young adults, older Chicago residents, and Spanish-speaking residents have shown increased program awareness since 1996 (Table 1). In 1998, 40 percent of Chicagoans reported learning about CAPS through information broadcast on television. From 1996 to 1998, the number of citizens learning about CAPS by word of mouth increased by 20 percent. Chicago residents also reported learning of the CAPS program through posters, signs, brochures, flyers, newsletters, and radio.

Community beat meetings were formed by planners to provide a forum for community members and police to share information, identify problems, and make action plans. Evaluators sent observers to community beat meetings to record participation and activities. Meetings targeted for observation included districts that were observed during previous evaluation efforts in

Table 1

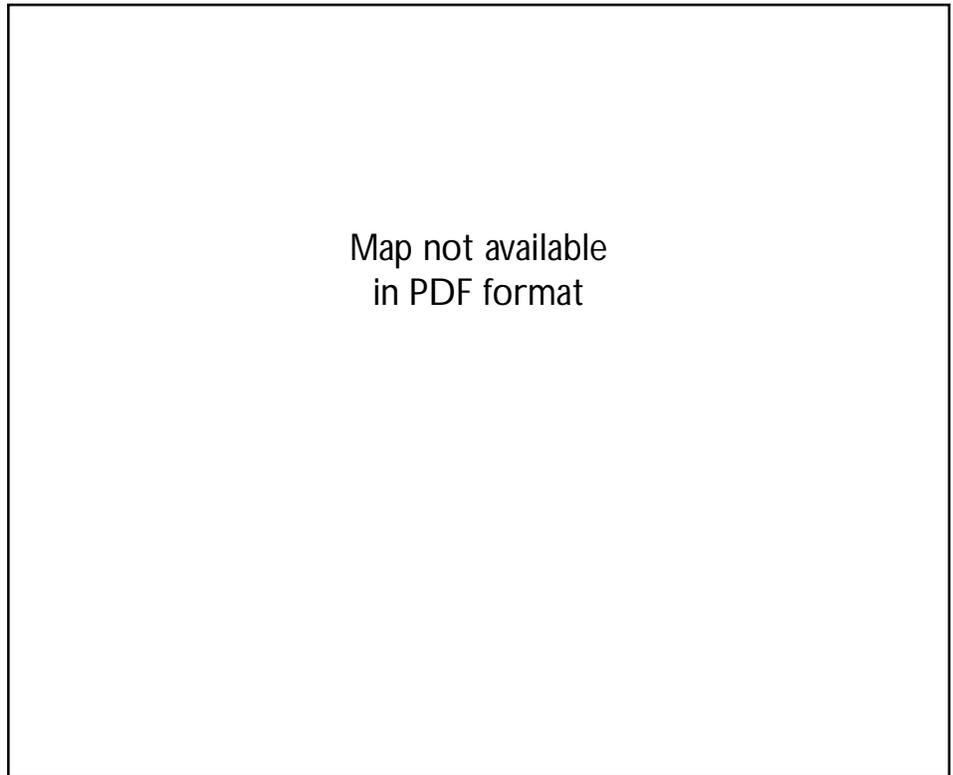
Personal background and awareness of CAPS program, 1996-1998

	1996	1997	1998
Number of cases	1,868	3,066	2,937
Whites	52%	73%	78%
Blacks	58%	74%	84%
Latinos	51%	62%	73%
Spanish	47%	51%	65%
English	54%	71%	80%
Ages 18-29	46%	66%	76%
Ages 30-49	61%	74%	83%
Ages 50-64	53%	74%	80%
Ages 65 and older	46%	53%	65%
Renters	50%	67%	75%
Homeowners	58%	74%	83%
Low Income	48%	59%	69%
Moderate income	59%	76%	84%
Less than high school education	41%	54%	62%
High school graduate	56%	73%	82%
Female	50%	66%	76%
Male	59%	75%	87%
Overall awareness	53%	68%	79%

1995. Observers rated agendas, information, facilitators, volunteers, action components, resident and officer feedback, problem identification and solutions, and meeting effectiveness. Problem identification was the most frequently met standard of those measured. In the majority of meetings observed, residents took the lead in identifying community problems. Of the observed solution-focused discussions,

Figure 1

Priority beats



45 percent of solutions offered came from attending police officers. This data suggests that while improvement has been made in some aspects of community beat meetings since 1995, the problem solving component of these meetings failed to make much progress.

The annual number of community attendees to beat meetings has grown from 59,000 in 1995 to 66,000 in 1998. During the first 11 months of 1998, 234 beat community meetings were held on average each month in Chicago, with an average of 6,000 participants per month. The highest levels of community involvement remain with low-income neighborhoods reporting the highest levels of violent crime and truancy. Overall, 14 percent of Chicago residents indicated they attended beat meetings over the past year. Meeting participants reported that they believed the meetings were productive.

Evaluators identified community factors that stimulated involvement in beat community meetings. Beat

meeting attendance is associated with each individual's level of *civic engagement*, or involvement in local organizations, according to the data. Evaluators also noted that while the use of television ads improved citizen awareness of CAPS, it did not appear to increase citizen participation.

Building collective efficacy

Collective efficacy is a term used by researchers to describe the level of cooperative community support and action toward initiatives that focus on the improvement of the community. The city is developing activities around the concept of collective efficacy in selected neighborhoods that seem to lack community infrastructure to support the program. The initiative supports problem-solving relationships between local organizations, the CAPS program, and beat residents. The city's CAPS Implementation Office coordinates efforts of community organizers. Organizers' activities are funded through the city's corporate budget and by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, a

Table 2
Activities identified and rated in each district

Activity	Evaluation
Beat team work and problem solving	Beat team meeting effectiveness Beat plans Beat team composition Intradepartmental forms use Downtime for problem solving ICAM use Sergeants' intervention Continuity of assignment Daily intrateam information exchange at change of watch
District team work and planning	District management meeting effectiveness Usefulness and currentness of district plan Sector team meeting effectiveness Communication of district plan to personnel and community DAC chair involvement in district management team
District management	Commander understanding in program and involvement with community Watch commander role and involvement
Community partnerships	Beat meeting effectiveness Community involvement in problem solving District advisory committee Officer interaction with community Court advocacy subcommittee Beat meeting attendance Beat meeting representativeness

philanthropic organization promoting economic development.

Organizers are faced with the challenge of motivating community members, who report low levels of satisfaction with police performance, to take action on behalf of their neighborhood. Figure 1 illustrates the number of beats benefiting from city and agency organizers' efforts. Much time is spent attending regular community and government meetings and collaborating with local police and beat facilitators to provide information, organize CAPS community events, and plan community training sessions. Resident attendance is strongly encouraged throughout the project.

Philosophical programmatic issues and questions effecting this initiative include an organizational style that stresses partnerships and cooperation as opposed to confrontation and conflict to build independence. Issues such as whether the city should fund its critics, and the effectiveness of city-managed community organizations, raise additional questions which will be

examined in further detail in the final year of evaluation.

During 1998, 1,880 Chicago residents participated in a telephone survey of communities involved in the project. Survey questions addressed various aspects of resident and police involvement in community policing. Topics discussed in the report included strength of informal social control and a *political mobilization* index.

Three questions focused on the strength of informal social control. Each questioned whether citizens would become involved in a specific community event or whether they believed their neighbors would become involved in a specific event. Thirty-five percent of respondents indicated they thought their neighbors were very likely to intervene when a teenager is harassing a senior citizen. Fifteen percent believed their neighbors would call the police rather than personally intervene.

Responses to two questions were combined to create the *political mobilization* index. Residents were asked how likely they believed their

neighbors were to become politically active by organizing a protest of the closing of a local police station or the building of public housing in their neighborhood. Responses indicated that 75 percent of the residents surveyed believed their neighbors were likely or very likely to organize a protest against the closing of a local police station. Sixty percent said they believe it is very likely or likely that neighbors would organize to stop the development of public housing in their neighborhood.

Citywide program implementation

Measuring the level of CAPS program implementation within the structure of the Chicago Police Department is a main focus of the recently released evaluation report. Evaluators collected and analyzed data from interviews with police personnel and civilian district advisory committee leaders, and conducted surveys with beat officers and sergeants, civilian beat facilitators, and civilian district administrative managers. Field observations also were gathered from training sessions, management seminars, and planning and strategy meetings. Four sets of activities were identified and rated by district based on the data collected. Table 2 details the components identified in each group. The ratings included "very good," "good," "satisfactory," "poor," and "very poor."

The first area examined was beat teamwork and problem-solving activities. Generally, program components such as the use of computerized crime analysis, continuity of beat assignments, and beat integrity and composition of beat teams were ranked "satisfactory" or above. Conversely, the practice of exchanging information between police officers during shift changes, effective intradepartmental forms use, sergeant intervention during dispatching problems, and the quality of beat plans were given low ratings by evaluators.

Second, district teamwork and planning activities were examined. Low ratings were given with regard to effectiveness of sector teams and district management team meetings, and the usefulness and dissemination

of each district's plans. The involvement of district management team leaders was the only component in this area to be rated "satisfactory." During the evaluation, Chicago Police Department officials had not yet approved any district plans developed for the CAPS program.

Third, the effectiveness of district management was measured. Evaluators noted a small number of watch commanders creating a role for themselves in the Patrol Division's strategy. Few district commanders effectively support the program; rather they simply meet the minimum requirements. Civilian administrative managers are described by evaluators as confident in their role but pessimistic about the future of their position within the Chicago Police Department. Also noted is the continuing development of roles for beat team sergeants and neighborhood relations sergeants.

Finally, community partnership activities were evaluated. Court advocacy and beat community meetings were the most highly rated components

of this group. Program facilitators and beat sergeants appeared to be running community meetings in a cooperative manner and attendance has improved. Data collected indicated that meetings most often do not result in a clear course of action addressing identified problems, however. Also, while their subcommittees appear to be effective, district advisory committees still do not have a clear role. The ambiguity of their role contributed to a low evaluation rating in this area.

Community support initiatives

Additional initiatives have developed in support of the CAPS program. Community efforts tackling liquor and housing issues increased during the study period. The Vote Dry Referendum, for example, is responsible for the closing of several problem liquor establishments in Chicago.

Activities involving the Housing Court and the Law Department provide a resource for community residents to identify and handle problem buildings in their neighborhood. The CAPS imple-

mentation office, the Strategic Inspections Task Force, the Corporation Counsel, the Court Advocacy program, and representatives of the Cook County court system support this initiative.

The creation of the Department of Administrative Hearings has established the first municipal adjudicatory system in the nation. Enforcement of city ordinances through special hearing officers rather than by the court system provides residents and police another avenue to address problem buildings and other quality of life issues.

Conclusion

Community awareness of and participation in the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy increased between 1993 and 1998. Activities aimed at building collective efficacy and a renewed effort toward citywide implementation are the current focus of CAPS. The continued work of the Chicago Community Policing Evaluation Consortium will provide CAPS participants with valuable insight to support program initiatives. ♦

