

Smart Policing Initiative

Inaugural Meeting

May 19-20, 2010

The Smart Policing Initiative (SPI) is a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)-sponsored initiative that supports law enforcement agencies in building evidence-based, data-driven law enforcement tactics and strategies that are effective, efficient, and economical. Smart Policing represents a strategic approach that brings more "science" into police operations by leveraging innovative applications of analysis, technology, and evidence-based practices. The goal of the SPI is to improve policing performance and effectiveness while containing costs; an important consideration in today's fiscal environment.

The SPI community is a collaborative between BJA, CNA, and ten local law enforcement agencies that will test innovative and evidence-based solutions to serious crime problems. Current SPI grantees include Boston, Glendale, Arizona, Lansing, Michigan, Los Angeles, Memphis, Palm Beach, Philadelphia, Reno, Savannah, and Winston-Salem. Working with research partners, these cities will collect and analyze data and devise solutions to such problems as street robberies, juvenile prescription drug abuse, repeat violent offenders, and neighborhood drug markets. Along the way, the SPI community

will document best practices and lessons learned to improve innovative, economic

policing strategies nationwide. CNA, a non-profit research organization, is BJA's trusted partner and will provide training and technical assistance to the SPI community throughout the initiative.



Inaugural Meeting

The Inaugural Smart Policing Meeting, held in Alexandria, Virginia, on May 19-20 2010, marked the first opportunity for the SPI community to collaborate on project goals, share best practices, review important components of Smart Policing, and learn about promising police innovation practices. Law enforcement and research representatives from all ten SPI sites, BJA leadership, and a cadre of CNA subject matter experts attended the meeting.



James Burch, Acting Director of BJA, provided opening remarks, followed by comments from Laurie Robinson, Assistant Attorney General, and Kristina Rose, Acting Director of the National Institute of Justice. Each SPI site provided a summary of the specific criminogenic problem and mitigation strategy associated with their projects. The remainder of the meeting involved interactive training presented by subject matter experts from law enforcement and academia. These lessons focused on five key components of Smart Policing: Performance measurement and research partnerships, outreach and collaboration; managing organizational change; the use of intelligence for strategic targeting; and data and information systems. It is paramount that the SPI community members consider each of these

components as they implement their Smart Policing initiatives.

Performance Measurement and Research Partnerships — SPI purposefully requires rigorous, systematic research regarding the implementation and outcomes of the innovations under its name. Therefore, members of the SPI community must improve the quality of their knowledge base about effective police practices and their confidence in research findings by thoroughly documenting implementation activities, improving performance measurement, and measuring outcomes using comparative designs.



Outreach and Collaboration — The law enforcement community has recognized for years that police agencies must establish effective communication and working relationships with citizens and community leaders to effectively perform their jobs. In most cases it is not possible, and not advisable, to proceed with a major new policing initiative (especially one that “targets” offenders or neighborhoods) without public education, outreach to the public, and public “buy in.”

Managing Organizational Change — Innovation and change, two primary objectives of the SPI, naturally lead to new roles, expectations, and processes external to and within an organization. Members of the SPI community must plan for organizational change, anticipate obstacles to successful organizational change, and develop strategies to mitigate internal and external resistance to change.

Using Intelligence for Strategic Targeting — Giving careful consideration to data and determining how it reflects, or is influenced by, a crime environment

enables law enforcement decision makers to *intelligently* implement strategic activities with the greatest likelihood of achieving the desired outcome. As SPI sites strategically target policing efforts and resources on crime hot spots and/or repeat offenders, they must effectively use intelligence to best determine which places or people should receive the most attention.

Data and Information Systems — Smart Policing requires adept and efficient utilization of data and information resources. Comprehensive Smart Policing data incorporates more than “traditional” police information resources, such as calls for service, offenses reported, arrests, complaints, and mapped locations of various kinds. Smart Policing also includes research data (e.g., offender studies), data from external entities (e.g., hospital databases), and data from external justice agencies (e.g., probation and parole).

Conclusion

BJA encouraged the SPI community to seriously consider each of the five Smart Policing components as local Smart Policing innovations get underway. Partnerships with political officials, community organizations, and other public service entities are paramount to successful implementation of economical and effective policing strategies. Smart Policing will benefit an entire community, not only through cost-savings and improvements to criminogenic problems, but also through the promotion of a sense of community and collaboration. For more on the SPI and the Inaugural Smart Policing National Meeting (including lesson summaries, downloadable presentations, and podcasts), visit www.smartpolicinginitiative.com.

