Smart Policing Initiative

Data. Analysis. Solutions.

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 is a collaborative effort between BJA, CNA (the SPI training and technical assistance provider)[1], and local law enforcement agencies that are testing innovative and evidence-based solutions to serious crime problems. Past and present SPI grantees include Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Brooklyn Park, MN; Cambridge, MA; Chula Vista, CA; Cincinnati, OH; Columbia, SC; East Palo Alto, CA; Evans County, GA; Frisco, TX; Glendale, AZ; Indio, CA; Joliet, IL; Kansas City, MO; Lansing, MI; Las Vegas, NV; Los Angeles, CA; Lowell, MA; Memphis, TN; Michigan State Police; New Haven, CT; New York City, NY; Palm Beach, FL; Pharr, TX; Philadelphia, PA; Phoenix, AZ; Pullman, WA; Port St. Lucie, FL; Reno, NV; Savannah, GA; Rochester, NY; San Diego, CA; Shawnee, KS; Winston-Salem, NC; and York, ME.

Working with research partners, these agencies collect and analyze data to devise solutions to problems such as street robberies, juvenile prescription drug abuse, repeat violent offenders, and neighborhood drug markets. The SPI community documents best practices and lessons learned so as to incorporate innovative, economical policing strategies nationwide.

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[1] CNA, a non-profit research organization, is BJA's partner and provides training and technical assistance to the SPI community.

Building the Smart Policing Community

BJA provides numerous opportunities for SPI sites to gather with their colleagues and counterparts, BJA leadership, and a cadre of CNA subject matter experts (SMEs) to collaborate on project goals, share best practices, review important components of Smart Policing, and learn about promising and innovative police practices. This includes such activities as national and regional meetings, peer-to-peer site visits, and webinars.

In addition, a SPI SME consults regularly with each SPI site to provide advice and targeted technical assistance. Each agency works with its

research partner to identify crime problems, devise an implementation process and research methodology, collect data, assess the strategic approach to the problem, and evaluate results. All technical assistance and lessons focus on the five key components of Smart Policing:

1. performance measurement and research partnerships,
2. outreach and collaboration,
3. managing organizational change,
4. strategic targeting, and
5. making better use of intelligence and other data and information systems.

Performance Measurement and Research Partnerships — SPI purposefully requires systematic research on the implementation and outcome of the innovations. 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 evaluation strategies and designs.

Outreach and Collaboration — For years, the law enforcement community has recognized that police agencies must establish effective communication and working relationships with citizens and community leaders in order to effectively perform their jobs. In most cases, it is neither possible nor advisable to go forward with a major new policing initiative (especially one that targets offenders or neighborhoods) without public education, outreach, and "buy in."

Managing Organizational Change — Innovation and change, two primary objectives of the SPI, naturally lead to new roles, expectations, and processes both inside and outside 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.

Strategic Targeting — Carefully considering data and determining how they reflect, or can be influenced by, a criminal environment enables law enforcement decision-makers to implement those strategic activities that have the greatest

THE SPI WEBSITE: AN ONLINE RESOURCE FOR ALL

The SPI website contains information on SPI's history, personal pages for each of the SPI sites, webinars, numerous publications and articles, podcasts, community links, and summaries of all SPI events. You can also connect with the SPI community through our social networking sites on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, or view the website on a mobile device. www.smartpolicinginitiative.com

likelihood of achieving the desired outcome. SPI sites strategically target policing efforts and resources on crime hot spots and/or repeat/prolific offenders.

Making Better Use of Intelligence and Other Data and Information Systems — Smart Policing requires adept and efficient use of data and information resources. Comprehensive Smart Policing data goes beyond traditional police information resources; it uses police intelligence as well as data on calls for service, offenses reported, arrests, and complaints that are correlated with mapped locations of various "hot spots." Smart Policing also includes research data (e.g., offender- or location-based studies), data from external entities (e.g., hospital databases), and data from external justice agencies (e.g., probation and parole).

Conclusion

BJA encourages the SPI community to consider each of the five Smart Policing components as local Smart Policing innovations get underway. Traditional and non-traditional partnerships with public officials, community organizations, and other public service entities are paramount to the 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, visit www.smartpolicinginitiative.com.