



# On Good Authority

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*On Good Authority* is a periodic briefing on trends and issues in criminal justice program evaluation. This report was written by staff Research Analyst Karen S. Levy McCanna. It is one of four summaries highlighting the 1999 program evaluation of the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy. The evaluation was conducted by the Chicago Community Policing 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 combines problem solving, planning, and teamwork

Originally implemented in five prototype police districts in 1993, the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) was later expanded to include all 25 city police districts, making it one of the nation's largest community policing projects. Teamwork is a central theme of the program, which incorporates a variety of techniques to foster partnerships with neighborhood residents and local police. This *On Good Authority* summarizes the evaluation findings of the beat teamwork and problem-solving components of CAPS, as well as the district management teamwork and planning components.

An important feature of any program is how effectively it is actually implemented. Evaluators have been closely monitoring CAPS implementation since its inception. In the 1999 report, evaluators systematically examined every district's progress in implementing 25 distinct elements of CAPS.

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected through extensive interviewing, field observations, and surveys. These elements fell under four general categories: beat teamwork and problem solving, district management teamwork and planning, district management, and community partnerships. Each of the 25 program components was assessed on a scale developed by evaluators to give a numerical weight to the extent of program implementation. They included:

- 3.0 — Very good.

The Chicago Community Policing Evaluation Consortium concluded an evaluation of the CAPS program in 1999. This *On Good Authority* is the last in a series of four summaries on the 1999 evaluation research report *Community Policing in Chicago, Years Five and Six: An Interim Report*. The evaluation was funded by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority using federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act funds. The National Institute of Justice and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation provided additional funding.

- 2.5 — Good.
- 2.0 — Satisfactory.
- 1.5 — Poor.
- 1.0 — Very poor.

### CAPS focus on teamwork

The beat teamwork and problem-solving category includes nine components of CAPS that encourage teamwork at all levels, beginning with beat team meeting effectiveness. Beat teams are led by sergeants and are made up of officers who work within the same geographical area during each of three shifts. The meetings are designed to foster collaboration and information sharing within teams and between watches. Collaboration and information sharing activities are the

basis of the problem-solving approach to policing that beat officers are encouraged to utilize.

### Beat teamwork component

Using the developed weighted scale, evaluators rated beat team meeting effectiveness as satisfactory (2.0), with more almost 65 percent of the districts receiving satisfactory scores, 20 percent receiving good ratings, and 12 percent scoring poor ratings. Only one district received the lowest rating of very poor (1.0).

According to the Chicago Police Department’s General Order 96-3 (Patrol Division Strategy to Address Chronic Crime and Disorder Problems), beat team officers are mandated to attend meetings that will enable them to coordinate their efforts with each other and the residents of their beat. A lack of beat meeting attendance could limit awareness of priorities and plans in their districts. Some involved with CAPS feared that efforts to reduce overtime costs might prevent off-duty beat officers from attending the meetings. However, with a citywide score of 2.2, this component is one of the strongest within the beat teamwork and problem-solving category.

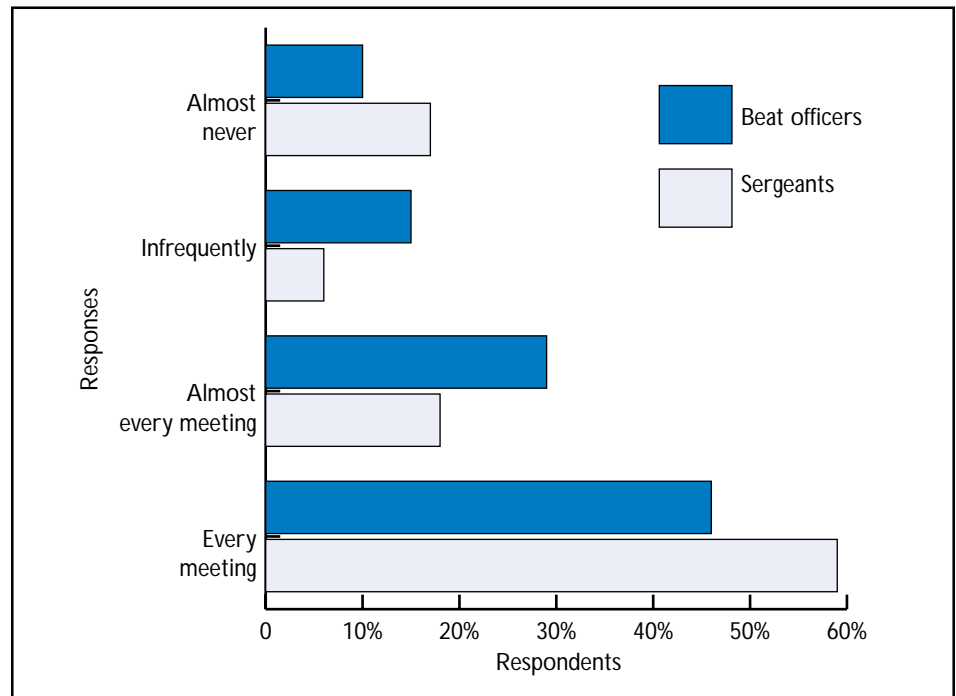
**Beat plans** are composed of strategies designed to address community concerns identified by residents at beat community meetings and by the beat team. First implemented in 1996 with beat team meetings, beat plans were completed by 1997. Evaluators rated districts on whether beat plans were effectively used. Citywide, 72 percent of districts scored satisfactory to good. The remaining districts rated below average. About 65 percent of officers surveyed reported that beat plans were discussed at beat team meetings most of the time. In addition, 37 percent of officers said beat plans were updated very often and 40 percent said plans were updated somewhat often. Two-thirds of those surveyed said the plans were somewhat useful or very useful.

### Problem-solving strategies

The community-based philosophy of CAPS necessitates that officers devote as much time as possible to working with

Figure 1

Survey response: beat team meeting attendance



community members on their beat to resolve crime and disorder problems. The continuity of beat assignments was rated based upon attempts made by a district to maintain its officers’ assignments. Twenty-three of the 25 districts received a satisfactory (2.0) rating. More than 70 percent of officers surveyed said that the same officers consistently work in a beat or sector.

**The CAPS beat integrity policy** specifies that beat officers are to answer calls for service primarily within their beat. Sixty percent of commanders, watch commanders, and beat team leaders interviewed rated beat integrity as satisfactory, 23 percent rated it as good, and 16 percent rated beat integrity as poor.

Evaluators noted that higher-level command personnel gave beat integrity a higher rating than did team leaders (sergeants). They speculated this perspective may be attributed to the higher command’s district-wide perspective as compared to the sergeants who monitor radio traffic and are aware of what their officers are doing on a regular basis. The citywide average score for this component was 1.8 from all respondents.

**Intra-watch information exchange** is augmented by a daily watch assignment record form and acts as the communication avenue between officers working the same beat on different shifts. Information exchange was the lowest-rated component of the beat teamwork category, scoring an average of 1.4 citywide. Timing was the greatest hindrance to the exchange of information, which was held following roll call when departing officers were ending their shift and arriving officers had waiting calls for service. Despite a low occurrence of information sharing, the exchange was valued by officers. More than 75 percent of officers surveyed rated the information exchange component as useful or somewhat useful. Supervisors interviewed suggested beat updates may be shared over mobile data terminals installed in nearly every patrol car.

**Problem-solving downtime** allows officers to work on beat plans without the responsibility of answering radio calls. Districts were rated based on how often officers requested downtime. Thirty-two percent of districts received good or very good ratings, 36 percent were rated satisfactory, and 32 percent were rated poor or very poor.

**Computerized crime mapping and analysis** was considered a key component of Chicago's community policing program from its inception. Each district is equipped with operational Information Collection for Automated Mapping (ICAM2) systems and three district officers per watch were trained to use the technology. The training also enabled the officers to provide instruction on the system to their co-workers. Districts were rated on whether officers utilized ICAM2. Citywide, ICAM2 use rated above satisfactory at 2.2. The three top-rated districts had commanders committed to the use of ICAM2 and evaluators determined that management is the key to computerized crime mapping usage.

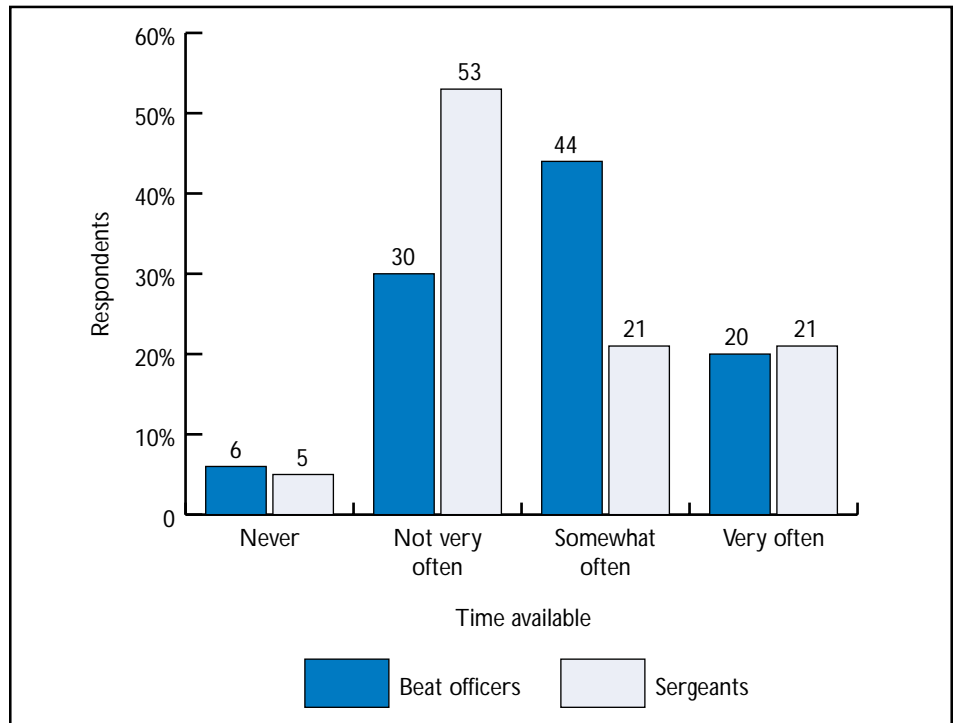
**The intra-departmental support service request form** allows beat team leaders to seek help (after getting approval from the sector management team leader, district commander, and area deputy chief) from other divisions or units outside the district for documented priority problems on the beat. Use of the intra-departmental support service request form increased in 1999. Seventy-six percent of districts reported requesting services from outside units in 1999, while one-third of the districts requested additional services in 1998. Those who had submitted forms continued to find other units' responses timely. Overall, beat team leaders had confidence in the form's effectiveness.

**The CAPS problem-solving model** consists of five basic steps: identify and prioritize; analyze; design strategies; implement strategies; and evaluate and acknowledge success. The problem-solving model has been emphasized through a variety of training opportunities. More than half of the beat officers who were surveyed reported using the model.

Sergeants serving as beat team leaders have assumed the beat team leadership role. Virtually all beat team leaders take turns supervising beat community meetings. Evaluators learned that some districts have a shortage of sergeants, causing some beat team leaders to be assigned to oversee beats with which they have little job-related daily contact. In interviews, 84 percent of

Figure 2

Survey response: time available for preventive work



sergeants reported daily interactions with their beats. Even in cases where sergeants were assigned to other sectors or had non-patrol assignments, beat team leaders dutifully drove through their beat and communicated regularly with their fellow officers.

**City services** are a vital and innovative component of CAPS. Program participants were able to effectively deal with disorder problems through the link of city services with beat teams. An administration process was created to coordinate city service requests. The majority of survey respondents (82 percent) reported satisfaction with the timeliness of city service responses.

### Sector management

A lieutenant-led sector management team assigns resources and develops strategies to address beat priority problems and problems that cross beat boundaries. Evaluators rated the sector management teams on the regularity and effectiveness of their meetings, assessed the types of activities that teams reported engaging in, and the extent to which beat teams within the sector appeared to work together on

common problems. Watch commanders and beat team leaders were interviewed about this component.

Interviewees in 10 districts characterized their meetings in terms that yielded scores lower than 2.0. Citywide, respondents indicated that meetings rated just below the satisfactory level in terms of effectiveness (1.8). The most common reason for a district receiving low ratings for this component was that their sector teams held team meetings infrequently or not at all.

### District management teamwork component

District management teams include the district's commander, watch commanders, lieutenants, neighborhood relations sergeant, district advisory committee leader, and district administrative manager. The group is charged with setting broad priorities that determine the allocation of district resources, identify underlying conditions contributing to crime, and develop strategies that will affect those conditions. The meeting also provides a forum for the group to develop and update their district plan.

Evaluators interviewed district management team members, including district commanders, watch commanders, beat team sergeants, neighborhood relations sergeants, and district advisory committee leaders. District management team meetings were rated on regularity, whether the district plan was developed, updated, and monitored in that setting, and whether district personnel and the district advisory committee chair attended.

A score of 1.9 was achieved in this component citywide. Of districts rated below satisfactory, district management team meetings were held infrequently and key members of teams reported never having attended such meetings.

### Planning component

Evaluators also looked at the usefulness and timeliness of district plans. The district plan should identify and prioritize problems, describe the nature and extent of those problems, identify underlying causes, and address district

resource deployment as it relates to priority problems.

District plans were initially developed and reviewed in 1996. In 1997, CAPS co-managers conducted a daylong tutorial for each district management team. After the tutorial, the district plans were revised and submitted for review. When district commanders were interviewed during the evaluation, none had yet gotten feedback on or approval of the revised district plan. With this in mind, the usefulness and timeliness of district plans rated a score of 1.8. One district received a 3.0 rating; they met the criteria set by evaluators, documented the updating process, and detailed roles and expectations for team leaders on all levels.

### Conclusion

CAPS continues to focus on strengthening collaborative efforts between the community and local police. A comprehensive program has been implemented in the Chicago Police Department, and important aspects of community policing

have been assimilated into the department's daily operations. Tremendous strides have been made toward involving the public in securing neighborhood safety, and community policing has become a routine aspect of city life. ♦

