



# BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance Fact Sheet

*Nancy E. Gist, Director*

## Comprehensive Communities Program: A Unique Way To Reduce Crime and Enhance Public Safety

The Comprehensive Communities Program (CCP) is a nationwide crime prevention and crime control initiative established by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) in 1994. The CCP model stresses crime reduction and enhancement of public safety as vital elements to improving the quality of life in our nation's cities. CCP uses a simple approach that

- ❑ Brings together people most affected by crime problems.
- ❑ Gives each stakeholder a meaningful role in solving problems.
- ❑ Applies a deliberate planning and implementation process.

CCP's two primary components—community policing and community mobilization—bring together community residents and police officers to develop solutions to local problems. Other components of the program include community prosecution, drug courts, crime prevention through environmental design, youth involvement initiatives, and community corrections.

### Program Goals

CCP provides a framework in which community residents, government agencies, and private organizations can work together to improve the quality of life in a community. The goals of the program are to

- ❑ Suppress violence and restore the sense of community well-being needed to recapture the security of neighborhoods.

- ❑ Focus on the problems and concerns of communities and their neighborhoods by initiating comprehensive planning and improving government–community relationships.
- ❑ Develop a comprehensive, multiagency strategy within each community to identify the causes of violence and to control and prevent violent and drug-related crime.
- ❑ Use community policing and other efforts to encourage citizens to take an active role in problem solving.
- ❑ Coordinate and concentrate existing federal, state, local, and private agency resources in the program communities to maximize their impact on crime reduction.

### Program Principles

The following are key principles that underlie CCP goals:

- ❑ Partnership and collaboration.
- ❑ Shared problem identification and problem solving.
- ❑ Commitment to change how public safety works.

To date, 15 jurisdictions have participated in this public safety initiative. Although the sites differ in area, population, culture, politics, and resources, they all adhere to CCP principles in tailoring their program to meet their community's needs.

Program designers in Hartford, Connecticut, established Problem Solving Committees (PSCs) in each of the

city's 17 neighborhoods to reduce crime and enhance the quality of life. Each PSC is composed of leaders of neighborhood groups, congregations, business associations, clubs, and local agencies. Representatives from each PSC participate in the citywide Community Planning and Mobilization Committee, created to share information and promote shared problem solving. The city's community court, which was developed in 1998 and is the nation's second such court, evolved from Hartford's PSC efforts.

In Salt Lake City, Community Action Teams (CATs) operate in the city's seven council districts. CATs core groups of government agency representatives meet weekly to address local crime and disorder problems. The diversity of CAT membership and the range of expertise and resources they bring has helped make this problem-solving mechanism an ongoing city function.

## Critical Elements

In addition to its underlying principles, CCP is characterized by certain critical elements:

- ❑ **Strategic planning.** Ongoing planning by all key stakeholders is essential for any progress in developing this public safety strategy.
- ❑ **Management and operations.** An individual or team coordinator must be given authority to oversee this multifaceted strategy throughout its development.
- ❑ **Evaluation.** A sound public safety strategy must include an evaluation component to help determine whether goals are being met and to improve or modify the strategy if needed.
- ❑ **Sustainment.** The strategy must be viewed as a long-term effort, requiring ongoing commitment and support from stakeholders.

Boston initiated its CCP by engaging neighborhood residents and police officers in a citywide strategic planning process. The focus of this effort is to reduce crime problems that interfere with residents' quality of life. Two significant programs, replicated in other cities, grew out of this joint planning process—the Youth Service Providers Network, which links at-risk youth and their families with social services, and Operation Night-Light, which teams up probation and parole officers with police officers to monitor probationers and parolees.

Officials in Phoenix, Arizona, focused on one neighborhood, the Greater Coronado Historical District. Here, community groups, residents, police, and local agency representatives identified local problems and developed

solutions. These stakeholders collaborated with the University of Arizona to evaluate local conditions, measuring the fear of crime perceptions of residents before and after CCP activities. The evaluation guided efforts to modify the jurisdiction's crime prevention strategy.

## A Positive Approach With Positive Results

By using the CCP approach, 15 jurisdictions across the country have made great strides in reducing crime, improving the quality of life, and improving the delivery of services in their neighborhoods. They have mobilized community members, police, social service agencies, faith communities, city departments, and a host of other partners to prevent, intervene in, and control crime. Each collaborative was designed for a specific area, showing the flexibility and uniqueness of the CCP approach.

Baltimore, Denver, Fort Worth, Hartford, Salt Lake City, and Wichita have witnessed up to 50-percent reductions in violent crime in their CCP neighborhoods. Atlanta, Columbia, the District of Columbia, Oakland, and Seattle have also made measurable progress. The following are some success stories:

- ❑ Phoenix closed more than 70 drug houses.
- ❑ Omaha drastically reduced its juvenile truancy problem.
- ❑ Wilmington initiated a model juvenile drug court.
- ❑ Boston had only one gun-related juvenile death in a 4-year period.

## For Further Information

The following jurisdictions have implemented and sustained CCP's crime prevention and public safety approach.

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World Wide Web: [www.ncjrs.org](http://www.ncjrs.org)

Clearinghouse staff are available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. eastern time. Ask to be placed on the BJA mailing list.

**U.S. Department of Justice Response Center**

1-800-421-6770 or 202-307-1480

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