

1997 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing  
Application Program Abstract

Scanning

A problem continued to manifest itself to the West Covina Police Department: Repetitive calls for service from apartment complexes were consuming inordinate amounts of time and money.

Analysis

Crime analysis efforts substantiated the prevalence of these repetitive calls for service and provided a clear picture of which locations were the most troublesome. Drawing on open discussions with apartment managers, tenants, and residents in neighboring areas, the Department weighed their response alternatives.

Response

West Covina Police officers formulated a working training manual, and began finalizing the program details, including a computerized monitoring system for accurate evaluation. The Department put forth an impressive phased training program labeled the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

Assessment

Dramatic decreases in calls for services continue to show. Furthermore, crime analysis, input from managers and tenants, and marked increases in the occupancy rate all confirmed the success of this program, and continue as sources of evaluation.

In conjunction with the San Bernardino County Sheriffs Department, the West Covina Police Department has trained representatives from many of the surrounding police agencies, and several from much further away, reducing the possibility of merely dislocating the problem. The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program truly embodies the successful problem-oriented policing model.

## 1997 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing Application

### Scanning

A problem continued to manifest itself to the West Covina Police Department: Repetitive calls for service from apartment complexes were consuming inordinate amounts of time and money. Officers and managers understood that vast amounts of resources were being wasted on re-addressing the same complaints by managers and neighbors about problematic tenants. Crime analysis efforts substantiated the prevalence of these repetitive calls for service and provided a clear picture of which locations were the most troublesome. A West Covina Community Service Officer compiled the relevant data for the most troublesome apartment complex and revealed that in only one month, that location drained approximately 38 hours and \$2,868 (see enclosed Executive Lodge formula sheet). Based on those numbers, the West Covina Police Department would spend, on average, \$34,418 at this one location, and the City had 23 other apartment complexes.

### Analysis

For several years, this problem became more pronounced, and required a coordinated attempt to address it. As crime analysis, coupled with discussions with apartment managers and tenants, revealed, a host of motivations came into play as the Department endeavored to acquire a deep understanding of the problem. Some apartment managers, who most often did not live at their apartments, were unconcerned with the persistent problems at their property, and did not satisfactorily screen their tenants; other

managers were unwilling to confront problems that fell under their managerial discretion, but instead waited until they escalated into civil or criminal problems; other managers wanted to know how to deal with problematic tenants in a safe manner. Many tenants sought safer living environments, and voiced their concerns that the problematic tenants were not being handled by the managers. The problematic tenants themselves were generally engaged in disruptive and/or criminal activities and displayed little concern for their neighbors. The Department endeavored to clean up drug, gang, and other criminal activity. Finally, the City Government wanted to make the city more attractive to law-abiding renters.

Without a coordinated effort to address the problems at the apartment complexes, disturbances, threats, harassment, vandalism, and other harmful activities would continue, and scarce resources would be wasted. Citywide, law enforcement personnel observed good tenants fleeing and bad tenants moving in, in the absence of strict managers. Drawing on open discussions with apartment managers, tenants, and residents in neighboring areas, the Department weighed their response alternatives.

### Response

Already in existence were the Neighborhood Improvement Teams (NTTs), which were municipal task forces that focus on the safety inspection of residential housing structures, and the Safe Street Now Project, which focused on taking disruptive neighbors to small claims court, with guidance from the Department. The problem of the repetitive calls for service from the apartment complexes required something new. Officers on the

Department devised the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program to address the specific needs of apartment renters and managers. Officers from the Department communicated with Deputies in the San Bernardino County Sheriffs Department, who had previously begun a program to address this type of repetitive calls problem. Drawing on the Deputies' experiences, West Covina Police officers formulated a different working training manual, and began finalizing the program details. Understanding that it was vital to design a program that lent itself to accurate evaluation, the officers utilized a computerized data system that tracked and categorized calls for service. Furthermore, the changing occupancy rate would be used to highlight any rental patterns. With the intent of reducing calls, providing for proactive law enforcement, saving city funds and managers' funds (in eviction costs), and providing safer renting and managing environments, the Department put forth an impressive coordinated monitoring effort (including patrol personnel, special enforcement detail, narcotics detail, NITs, and a coordinating Community Service Officer).

But the main effort would be the classroom aspect of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. The Community Service Officer (CSO) held a meeting of apartment managers at the Department's Community Education Center, and then sent invitation letters to managers from every apartment complex in the area to attend the first phase of the program. Phase I consisted of an 8 hour training session for managers (on the topics of property management, tenant screening, law enforcement, fire safety, the court system, and the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) process), conducted by police officers, a Housing Authority representative, and an attorney. At the completion

of Phase I, each participant received a green certificate, which they could keep with them if they switched managerial locations or positions.

Phase II of the program was the CPTED inspection of the property, which is geared toward safety and environmental design rather than code enforcement. Successful completion of Phase II resulted in the property receiving a red certificate, confirming that the property had passed the CPTED inspection. Phase III consisted of the purchase and posting of Crime Free Multi-Housing Program signs (the only thing the participants pay for), which prominently indicated the safe and legal condition of the property, for all renters to see (renters could obtain this information through the Chamber of Commerce and the City's website as well).

Phase IV consisted of a tenant/resident meeting, to inform the residents at each property of the steps that the police and managers took to improve the safety conditions, and to stress the parts that each of the residents can play in maintaining those conditions. The residents were instructed in the details of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program, and were given blue certificates (to remain at their property site) upon completion of this phase. Phase V, the final stage, followed as the property was given a gold dated final certificate, with the requirement that the property must get inspected again and have another tenant meeting within one year.

The main difficulty in initial implementation was that to many people, the program represented an "unsafe" label that was unwelcomed on their property. However, as the program became better known, more renters and especially managers accepted the program as a positive commitment to a safer living environment. Other people in the community began to recognize the merits of the program, and became very supportive.

## Assessment

The positive impact of this program became evident quite early on as the Department experienced a 49% decrease in calls for service in the first four months. The Community Service Officer in charge of monitoring and implementing the program has tracked the results of the program (divided into six jurisdictions within the city) utilizing a database. Currently, the 24 participating apartment complexes (for a total of 2818 units), have experienced a 56% drop in calls for service and a 59% drop in criminal complaints since those properties joined the program (see enclosed CFMHP totals). Other goals were met as well, as apartment managers and police enjoyed greater recognizability and communication between themselves. Furthermore, crime analysis, input from managers and tenants, and marked increases in the occupancy rate all confirmed the success of this program, and continue as sources of evaluation.

Contingency plans were developed to address the possibility of a return to high rates of repeat calls for service from individual property sites, and these plans focused on keeping the lines of communication and monitoring open and regular.

West Covina's success in dealing with this problem has drawn other police agencies to us for training in the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program, and has reduced the possibility of dislocating the problem to a neighboring jurisdiction. In conjunction with the San Bernardino County Sheriffs Department, the West Covina Police Department has trained representatives from the Azusa, El Monte, Pomona, Hawthorne, and Costa Mesa police departments, as well as L.A. County Sheriffs Deputies from Industry and Walnut

Stations and Kings County Sheriffs Deputies. Furthermore, we will be training representatives from the Covina and Baldwin Park police departments.

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program continues to contribute to the increased safety and scenic improvement of the community, and this program truly embodies the successful problem-oriented policing model.

**1333 W. GARVEY AVE/EXECUTIVE LODGE  
 FORMULA SHEET FOR OFFICER TIME SPENT IN A 30 DAY PERIOD  
 (FOR 1 COMPLEX WITH 28 CALLS FOR SERVICE)**

CFS = CALLS FOR SERVICE  
 CR = CASE REPORT NUMBERS

\$38.97 per/hr for a top step patrol officer (includes salary and benefits; does not include unit/servicing, dispatch, records, supervisor, etc.)

\*\*\*\*\*

From the time an officer is dispatched to a call to the time they are available (without a report being made) is approximately 45 minutes.

47% of these calls require a second unit (sometimes a 3rd and a 4th)

This complex generated approximately 7\* case reports; requiring the officer to spend 141 minutes report writing. (Does not include cross streets, I.F.O., or "Executive")

\*\*\*\*\*

$$45 \text{ minutes} \times 28 \text{ CFS} = 1260 \text{ minutes}$$

$$45 \text{ minutes} \times 47\% (2d \text{ unit}) = 21.15 \text{ minutes}$$

$$7 \text{ reports} \times 141 \text{ minutes rpt/wrt} = 987 \text{ minutes}$$

+

---


$$2268.15 \text{ minutes}$$

\*\*\*\*\*

$$2268.15 \text{ minutes divided by } 60 \text{ minutes} = 37.80 \text{ hours}$$

$$38 \text{ hours} \times \$38.97 \text{ per hour for one officer} = \$2,868.24$$

$$\$2,868.24 \times 12 \text{ months} = \$34,418.88$$



CFMHP Totals  
by County

County ID#: 1 County Name : WC

by DYNAMIC DESIGN (C) 1997

printed on 7/17/1997

page #1 of 1

Line #	ID	Name	# props	# units	CALLS FOR SERVICE			CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS		
					#	# chg	% chg	#	# chg	% chg
1	CEN	CENTRAL	4	358	48	-48	-50%	9	-2	-18%
2	NE	NORTHEAST (E/O AZU	6	497	41	-82	-67%	13	-13	-50%
3	NS	NORTHSOUTH	3	557	35	-16	-32%	9	-5	-38%
4	NW	NORTHWEST (W/O AZU	7	836	63	-99	-61%	10	-38	-79%
5	SCEN	SOUTH CENTRAL	1	192	8	-16	-67%	1	-4	-80%
6	SS	SOUTHSIDE	3	378	33	-24	-42%	7	-9	-56%
6	jurisdictions	Totals :	24	2818	228	-285	-56%	49	-72	-59%

### 3. Agency and Officer Information

1. The entire department adopted this problem-solving initiative.
2. The entire management/administrative staff previously received problem-oriented policing and problem solving training.
3. No additional incentives were given.
4. Manuals and research from the San Bernardino County Sheriffs Department were utilized.
5. Problems identified with the problem-oriented policing and problem-solving models include the prevalence of repeated calls for service and large personnel and time commitments to re-address the same problems (both of which are being reduced by the program).
6. The entire West Covina Police Department's budget was involved in analyzing, evaluating, and responding to the problem. Outside resources committed include legal personnel and fire and safety personnel.

Name: John F. Schimanski  
Position/Rank: Administrative Assistant/Lieutenant  
Address: 1444 West Garvey Ave.  
City/State: West Covina, CA 91790  
**Phone:** (626) 814-8501  
Fax: (626) 813-8679  
**E-mail:** [community.relations@wcpd.org](mailto:community.relations@wcpd.org)