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TELEMASP BULLETIN

TEXAS LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM

January/February 2007

Volume 14, No. 1

Collaboration between Law Enforcement and Community Corrections Agencies

Government Publications
Texas State Documents

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The criminal justice system is expected by the general population to keep communities safe and to control crime to the extent possible. However, as everyone involved in criminal justice knows, this is exceptionally difficult to do because the system usually becomes involved only after crimes have been committed. In other words, the failure of social control has already occurred when representatives of criminal justice become active. Furthermore, the task of officers is complicated by the fact that the various agencies are involved at different times. Whereas police agencies are involved with offenders in the early stages of the criminal justice processes, community corrections agencies may become involved years later in the lives of these same offenders. To further complicate matters, police and community corrections see their own roles very differently. Police define their function primarily in terms of law enforcement, but parole and probation agents think of themselves as agents of corrections as the term community corrections implies. Although police and community corrections agencies are part of one general system in theory, the reality is that there is little coordination in their activities and their efforts aimed at establishing and maintaining social control may be fairly disjointed.

At the same time, there *should* be considerable coordination because there are some common concerns that underlie their responsibilities and duties. The monitoring of offenders provides one example. After an offender has been placed under some form of community supervision he or she may be monitored by an appropriate community corrections officer as well as law enforcement officers. In theory, this requires collaboration and cooperation between community corrections and police agencies. The more the representatives of the two types of agencies are familiar with each other's work, the more efficient and effective they are likely to be in their own. For instance, community corrections officers may assist police officers in their effort to investigate crimes. Similarly, a police officer who arrests a probationer may assist the probationer and the probation officer with a simple telephone call. Instead of proceeding with the usual criminal justice processes, a collaborative effort between the police and the probation department may lead to more efficient, and better, efforts of protecting the community and reintegrating an offender who has transgressed again, albeit in a minor fashion.

In practice, partnerships between community corrections and police agencies have been in existence for

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many years, but in most instances they have been relatively informal. Instead of having elaborate and formal arrangements as their basis, they often relied on personal friendships. A particular probation officer may have had a good friend working for the police, and they collaborated, but they did so on a personal rather than an agency level. The collaboration likely ended when the personal link was no longer present:

Unfortunately, most partnerships of this nature were based on individual relationships and rarely did they translate into formal relationships between agencies. With retirements, reassignments, promotions, and changing priorities, many of these wonderful personal relationships evaporated during the 1980s, and the effectiveness of offender supervision suffered (Beto, 2005).

Operation Night Light, Project Spotlight, and other Probation-Police Partnerships

There were several more formal partnerships that existed in the United States throughout the 1990s that were aimed at formalizing the informal arrangements of an earlier time. Operation Night Light in Boston was one such example that focused on youth violence and gang-related youth violence. Responding to high rates of youth violence and the failure of the traditional crime control model that had probation and police officers working independently, Boston attempted a new approach that formalized collaboration between agencies. Furthermore, Operation Night Light also changed monitoring patterns. Instead of visiting high risk youths during conventional daytime hours, teams of probation and police officers made surprise visits between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and midnight. These changes resulted in a substantial decrease in arrest rates for probationers under this program (Corbett, 1998; Kelling and Corbett, 2003).

Around the same time, under the guidance of the Manhattan Institute, a nationwide effort to transform probation was initiated. The Reinventing Probation Council took its inspiration from the "broken windows" thesis on policing. In its most basic form, the broken windows thesis states that police should respond to minor problems in communities. If left unchecked, these minor problems will evolve into major

ones. However, instead of simply enforcing the law, police officers should take a proactive problem solving approach to their work; an approach that includes meaningful partnerships with other agencies (Reinventing Probation Council, 2000).

Project Spotlight was an effort in Texas at such reforms. Grants from the Governor's Office allowed the creation of teams of juvenile probation officers, community supervision officers, and police officers in seven counties to provide better and more coordinated supervision of at-risk populations. Similar to Operation Night Light and the recommendations made by the Reinventing Probation Council, the Texas program included supervision during late evening hours, but also the provision of services from various social and community agencies (Kalmbach, 2002; Beto and Kester, 2002; Beto, 2005).

Other examples of collaborative relationships developed in the 1990s between law enforcement and community corrections include: the Anti-Violence Initiative in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Clark County Anti-Gang Unit in Vancouver, Washington; Project One Voice in New Haven, Connecticut; Smart Partners in Redmond, Washington; Fugitive Recovery Enforcement Team in San Francisco, California; Indianapolis Violence Reduction Partnership in Indianapolis, Indiana; and an information sharing project in Phoenix, Arizona (Parent and Snyder, 1999; Griffin, et al., 2004). More recently we have witnessed the growth of partnerships between law enforcement and community corrections agencies for the purpose of conducting probation and parole sweeps throughout the United States (News from the Field, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c).

The creation of partnerships between probation and police agencies has not been limited to the United States. The value of such relationships has been seen in Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Australia, where various forms of partnerships have been created (Evans, 2006; News from the Field, 2006a, 2006c).

The success of such programs hinges upon the level of support they receive from the parties involved. If partnerships are simply mandated from "the top down" rather than endorsed and nurtured they are much less likely to work.

Survey of Texas Law Enforcement Agencies

Two previous *TELEMASP Bulletins* have addressed the issue of police and community corrections collaboration. Kalmbach (2002) described Project Spotlight in the July/August 2002 bulletin, and Watkins addressed the issue more generally in "Formal Interagency Collaboration in Policing" (Watkins, 2001). To update these bulletins, and to evaluate the partnerships that now exist, the Correctional Management Institute of Texas and the Texas Regional Center for Policing Innovation surveyed adult and juvenile community corrections agencies to determine the nature and perceptions of partnerships with police agencies (Beto, 2005). In the current survey, Texas law enforcement departments were asked about their perceptions. Borrowing from earlier surveys by Sexton (2000), Hughes (2000), Watkins (2001), and Kalmbach (2002), particular interest was focused on the nature and impact of the effect of leadership and organizational core culture on partnerships. It was hypothesized that strong organizational leadership that supports and endorses partnerships with community corrections agencies would lead to more and better partnerships. Furthermore, it was also hypothesized that police agencies that possess a core culture that values collaboration have a greater number of partnership agreements than agencies that see the police mission in more isolated terms. Also of interest were differences between municipal police departments and sheriff's offices in terms of partnerships. It was hypothesized that the differences in political pressures on the two types of law enforcement departments

might affect the extent to which they enter into agreements of any kind with other agencies. Whereas both types of agencies operate in a political environment, the pressures are much greater for sheriff's offices as sheriffs must be elected and reelected on a regular basis. It was thus expected that sheriff's offices might have more and better established relationships with community corrections agencies.

Surveys were mailed to 243 sheriff's offices in Texas and also to a random sample of 262 municipal police departments. A total of 101 completed surveys were received from sheriff's offices and 130 from municipal law enforcement departments. The total response rate was 46 percent.

Major Findings

Law enforcement departments tend to have more relationships with adult probation departments than with adult parole or with juvenile probation departments, although the difference between adult and juvenile probation is often minimal; see Table 1. For instance, about 65 percent of the law enforcement departments have an informal partnership with adult probation departments with respect to information and intelligence sharing (the corresponding figures for adult parole and juvenile probation are 51.3 percent and 62.3 percent, respectively). For most other forms of "enhanced supervision partnerships" and "specialized enforcement partnerships" the figures are lower, but they are consistently higher for adult probation than for adult parole and about comparable for juvenile probation. For

Table 1
Percentages of Law Enforcement Departments
with Informal Partnerships with
Community Corrections Agencies

	Adult Probation	Adult Parole	Juvenile Probation
Information & Intelligence Sharing	65.5	51.3	62.3
Interagency Problem Solving Partnership	49.4	26.1	46.1
Interagency Training Initiatives	29.4	11.3	31.9



instance, 49 percent of law enforcement agencies have an informal partnership with adult probation agencies with respect to “interagency problem solving partnerships” but only 26 percent do so with adult parole, while about 46 percent of law enforcement departments have them with juvenile probation. With most other forms of specialized enforcement partnerships (e.g., sex offenders, domestic violence, gun removal, drug trafficking, bar checks, and so on) and enhanced supervision partnerships (e.g., ride alongs, targeting high crime areas, and targeting high risk offenders) the figures drop considerably although in many cases 20-40 percent of law enforcement departments report

some form of informal relationships between them and adult and juvenile probation departments (see Tables 2 and 3).

However, the overwhelming majority of law enforcement departments do not have any *formal* partnerships with any community corrections agencies. The greatest number we found for any form of *formal* partnership was 14 between law enforcement departments and adult probation. In the vast majority of cases, literally only a handful (i.e., less than five departments) reported formal partnerships with various types of community corrections agencies on specialized top-

Table 2
Percentages of Law Enforcement Departments
with Informal “Enhanced Supervision” Partnerships
with Community Correction Agencies

	Adult Probation	Adult Parole	Juvenile Probation
Targeting High Risk Offenders	37.9	23.8	30.7
Ride Along	23.3	8.7	18.5
Targeting High Crime Areas	22.1	10.4	16.8
Beats/Districts (geographical assignment)	14.7	5.2	13.8

Table 3
Percentages of Law Enforcement Departments
with Informal “Specialized Enforcement”
Partnerships with Community Corrections Agencies

	Adult Probation	Adult Parole	Juvenile Probation
Sex Offenders	49.6	34.6	31.5
Domestic Violence	39.7	20.8	28.0
Fugitive/Absconder Apprehension Units	38.4	27.8	34.1
Drug Trafficking	31.6	17.4	27.6
Gun Removal	22.0	13.0	19.9
Gang Interdiction	22.0	13.0	29.7
Quality of Life Issues	18.1	9.5	22.0
Bar Checks	15.9	8.2	13.9

ics. This means that most of these partnerships are not likely to survive when key individuals are transferred or retire (see Beto 2005).

Second, we were interested in how respondents from law enforcement departments who have either formal or informal partnerships evaluate these partnerships. In other words, do they see the partnerships as beneficial to their own agencies or do they see them as a strain on resources? In general, law enforcement representatives were quite positive in their assessments of the partnerships. As can be seen in Table 4, about 57 percent of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that "working with adult probation agencies has given me a great appreciation for their job" (the corresponding figures for juvenile probation and adult parole are 67 percent and 50 percent, respec-

tively). Similarly, more than 60 percent of all respondents say that the partnerships with each of the three kinds of community corrections agencies "has been a positive experience." Most optimistically, around 80 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, "I believe that the partnership with Adult Probation [Adult Parole or Juvenile Probation, respectively] is an effective method for supervising offenders." In contrast, however, only a small percentage of the respondents agree with the statement that "the partnerships have led to a decrease in adult and juvenile crime," respectively.

A related issue is whether law enforcement officers receive any formal training with respect to the work performed by the various community corrections agencies. Responses indicate law enforcement of-

Table 4
Percentages of Law Enforcement Departments that
View Existing Partnerships Positively

	Adult Probation	Adult Parole	Juvenile Probation
The information received from (adult probation/adult parole/juvenile probation) agencies as a result of the partnership is helpful.	80.9	78.5	72.9
I believe the partnership with (adult probation/adult parole/juvenile probation) agencies is an effective method for supervising offenders.	80.9	81.8	77.4
The roles of (adult probation/adult parole/juvenile probation) agencies and police working in partnership complement each other.	79.7	74.3	74.5
I am comfortable working with (adult probation/adult parole/juvenile probation) agencies.	79.1	79.3	79.2
Working with (adult probation/adult parole/juvenile probation) agencies has been a positive experience.	65.3	61.2	62.3
I would be in favor of the partnership with (adult probation/adult parole/juvenile probation) agencies becoming standard operating procedure in my department.	64.1	66.1	70.3
Working with (adult probation/adult parole/juvenile probation) agencies has given me a great appreciation for their job.	56.9	50.4	66.9
There are conflicts in the roles of police and (adult probation/adult parole/juvenile probation) agencies.	46.7	47.1	42.0
The roles of (adult probation/adult parole/juvenile probation) agencies and police working in partnership are confused.	38.3	39.7	43.9
The filed activities with (adult probation/adult parole/juvenile probation) agencies has reduced adult crime.	24.7	13.3	26.6

Officers are much more likely to receive training with regard to juvenile probation than with regard to adult probation and parole. About 26 percent of law enforcement departments that have some form of partnership with a juvenile probation department receive at least some training on their work (the corresponding figures for adult probation and parole are 11 and 8 percent, respectively).

Third, we were interested in studying any differences in partnerships between sheriff's offices and municipal law enforcement departments. In Table 5, differences in both formal and informal partnerships between adult probation departments and the two types of law enforcement agencies are depicted. Sheriff's offices are much more likely to have partnerships with adult probation than do municipal law enforcement departments. For instance, they are three times as likely to have *formal* partnerships with adult probation with respect to information and intelligence sharing. Similarly, they are more than six times as likely to have a *formal* partnership with respect to fugitive/absconder apprehension units. For many of the other enhanced supervision and specialized enforcement partnerships the differences are not as dramatic, but they indicate consistently that sheriff's departments are more likely to have both formal and informal partnerships than municipal law enforcement departments. The only notable exception to this rule is in the area of domestic violence where more municipal departments report having both formal and informal partnerships with adult probation than do sheriff's offices.

The situation is less clear with respect to partnerships involving adult parole and juvenile probation departments and law enforcement. No statistically significant differences in partnerships were found between the two types of departments and adult parole and juvenile probation, respectively. However, a closer inspection of Table 6 indicates that sheriff's offices are consistently more likely than municipal departments to have both formal and informal partnerships with adult parole. Almost no law enforcement agencies have any formal partnerships with adult parole, with the exception of partnerships that focus on sex offenders.

Differences in partnerships between the two types of law enforcement agencies and juvenile probation departments are minimal as seen in Table 7. However,

it is noteworthy that there are several areas in which municipal departments are more likely than sheriff's offices to have entered into partnerships, both formal and informal, with juvenile probation. For instance, there are more partnerships targeting high risk offenders and sex offenders that involve municipal departments than sheriff's offices.

Finally, we were interested in studying the relationship between the nature of the core culture of the law enforcement agency, support of the leadership of the agency, the existence of partnerships, and how they are seen by the agency. The concept of core culture was measured by support for statements such as: "The majority of employees in our organization believe that selected groups of offenders can change their behavior and life styles than that a balanced combination of sanctions, supervision, and services can assist them in doing so." The concept of leadership, in turn, was measured by agreements with statements such as: "The leaders of our organization know what it will take to create and maintain an interagency public safety alliance in our jurisdiction, and they are committed to doing so."

It was hypothesized that good leadership and supportive core culture could lead to more partnerships, and existing partnerships would be evaluated more positively. The findings indicate partial support for this hypotheses. It was shown that good leadership leads to more informal partnerships (the number of cases of formal partnerships was too small to allow for any meaningful statistical analyses), but a core culture supportive of partnerships does not seem to lead to more partnerships. However, there are very strong, positive relationships between supportive core culture and good leadership and positive evaluations of existing partnerships. Law enforcement departments that are characterized by a core culture that strongly supports interagency partnerships tend to evaluate them positively. The same holds true for departments that have leaders that see a benefit in partnerships.

Implications

The results of the survey lead us to be cautiously optimistic about the future of partnerships between police and community corrections agencies. It appears that partnerships between probation departments and police are better established than those involving po-



Table 5
Percentages of Sheriff's Offices and Municipal Police Departments
with Partnerships with Adult Probation

	Formal Partnerships		Informal Partnerships	
	Sheriff's Offices	Municipal PDs	Sheriff's Offices	Municipal PDs
Information & Intelligence Sharing	9.9	3.1	67.3	63.8
Sex Offenders	7.9	3.2	53.5	46.2
Fugitive/Absconder Apprehension Units	5.0	0.8	46.5	31.5
Interagency Problem Solving Partnership	4.0	2.3	60.4	41.1
Domestic Violence	3.0	3.8	48.5	63.8
Gun Removal	2.0	0.0	26.7	18.5
Bar Checks	2.0	0.0	15.8	16.2
Gang Interdiction	2.0	0.0	22.8	21.5
Drug Trafficking	2.0	0.8	36.6	27.1
Quality of Life Issues	2.0	0.8	20.8	15.4
Interagency Training Initiatives	0.0	0.8	34.7	24.8
Ride Along	0.0	0.8	27.7	19.2
Beats/Districts (geographical assignment)	0.0	0.8	20.8	10.0
Targeting High Crime Areas	0.0	1.5	24.0	20.0
Targeting High Risk Offenders	0.0	1.5	45.5	31.5

Table 6
Percentages of Sheriff's Offices and Municipal Police Departments
with Partnerships with Adult Parole Departments

	Formal Partnerships		Informal Partnerships	
	Sheriff's Offices	Municipal PDs	Sheriff's Offices	Municipal PDs
Sex Offenders	6.9	7.0	35.6	33.3
Information & Intelligence Sharing	2.0	2.3	51.5	50.8
Interagency Problem Solving Partnership	1.0	1.6	32.7	21.1
Interagency Training Initiatives	1.0	0.0	9.9	11.6
Domestic Violence	1.0	1.6	23.8	17.8
Gun Removal	1.0	0.8	15.8	10.9
Fugitive/Absconder Apprehension Units	1.0	1.6	34.0	22.5
Ride Along	0.0	0.8	9.9	7.0
Beats/Districts (geographical assignment)	0.0	0.0	5.9	4.7
Targeting High Crime Areas	0.0	0.0	10.9	9.4
Targeting High Risk Offenders	0.0	0.8	22.8	24.0
Bar Checks	0.0	0.8	7.9	8.5
Gang Interdiction	0.0	0.8	11.9	14.0
Drug Trafficking	0.0	0.8	21.8	13.3
Quality of Life Issues	0.0	0.8	10.9	7.8

Table 7
Percentages of Sheriff's Offices and Municipal Police Departments
with Partnerships with Juvenile Probation Departments

	Formal Partnerships		Informal Partnerships	
	Sheriff's Offices	Municipal PDs	Sheriff's Offices	Municipal PDs
Information & Intelligence Sharing	6.9	8.5	64.4	60.5
Sex Offenders	5.0	5.4	29.7	32.3
Interagency Problem Solving Partnership	4.0	3.8	49.5	43.1
Domestic Violence	3.0	2.3	27.7	27.7
Interagency Training Initiatives	2.0	3.1	33.7	30.0
Targeting High Risk Offenders	2.0	2.3	28.0	32.3
Gun Removal	2.0	0.8	22.8	17.1
Gang Interdiction	2.0	1.5	29.7	29.2
Drug Trafficking	2.0	0.8	30.7	24.6
Fugitive/Absconder Apprehension Units	2.0	1.5	33.7	33.8
Ride Along	1.0	1.5	22.8	14.6
Beats/Districts (geographical assignment)	1.0	0.8	16.8	10.8
Targeting High Crime Areas	1.0	0.8	17.8	15.4
Bar Checks	1.0	1.6	15.8	12.4
Quality of Life Issues	1.0	0.0	23.8	20.0

lice and parole departments. However, there are also some troubling signs in the nature and extent of partnerships.

Beto (2005) showed that partnerships in the past were primarily informal in nature and thus were often terminated when key individuals retired, were transferred, or were promoted. Programs such as Operation Night Light and Project Spotlight included provisions that would formalize such arrangements and thus become more permanent. However, the survey results indicate that this is not the case in Texas at this time. The overwhelming majority of partnerships that exist at this time are informal rather than formal and are thus subject to the problems identified by Beto (2005).

Law enforcement departments have more partnerships with probation departments than with parole departments. Although items were not included in the questionnaire that would allow formal examination of this issue, it is reasonable to speculate that differences in the level of local control between probation and parole departments can account for this fact. Probation offices are under local county control whereas parole is under state-level control. This would lead us to predict that probation officers are more likely to seek out partnerships with local law enforcement departments (and vice versa) than is the case for parole officers. Both sheriff's offices and municipal law enforcement departments are local stake holders rather than being oriented toward state-level issues.

It was previously noted that there might be differences between municipal law enforcement departments and sheriff's offices in their willingness to enter into partnerships with community corrections agencies. Although they both operate in a political environment, political pressures are probably greater in the case of sheriff's offices, as sheriffs must run for reelection on a regular basis. The findings of the survey indicate partial support for this interpretation, but it applies mostly to partnerships with adult probation departments.

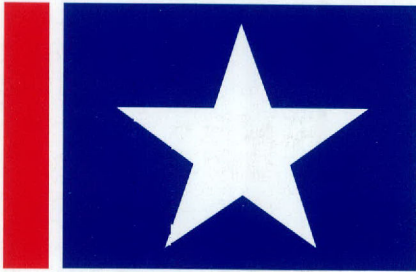
One of the most encouraging findings of the survey is that law enforcement departments that have part-

nerships with community corrections agencies tend to view them favorably. This leaves room for hope for expansion of such partnerships in the future. Transfers and movement of key individuals could lead to expansion. As they move to new positions in departments that do not have established partnerships, they may initiate them. Another way partnerships could proliferate is through enlightened leadership. Although one would hope that law enforcement officers would want to have partnerships, the reality is that they may not. Enlightened police managers may force rank and file officers into partnerships and the latter will develop favorable attitudes after they are forced to engage in the cooperative interaction. More generally, this research supports the idea that behavior may shape attitudes as much as attitudes shape behavior. A parallel can be drawn here between this study and community-oriented policing. Police officers who see their work primarily in terms of aggressive law enforcement may be openly hostile to this philosophy of policing. However, research indicates that once they become involved in community-oriented policing they often change their opinions and come to endorse the concept (Lurigio and Rosenbaum, 1994; Oliver, 2004). Given the obvious philosophical similarities between community-oriented policing and the partnerships we discuss, we are optimistic that the same attitudinal changes can occur with respect to partnerships between police and community corrections agencies.

Closely related to the above, this study also shows that leadership is more important in building partnerships than a core culture that is supportive of such arrangements. Leaders in probation and parole departments may be able to use these findings to push for more partnerships. A first step would be in the identification of police leaders who are sympathetic to their goals. Once they are identified, partnerships can be initiated. At first they may be informal, but should be formalized if at all possible. After the partnerships are in place, and supported by good leadership, they are likely to be evaluated positively by law enforcement personnel.

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TELEMASP Bulletins, ISSN 1075-3702,
are produced under an agreement with the

Police Research Center

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