

AN EVALUATION
OF THE
CITY OF PORTSMOUTH - POLICE DEPARTMENT
"Crime Prevention Program"

GRANT NUMBER

78-I-A1948 B01

PROJECT PERIOD

January 31, 1978 - March 5, 1979

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NEW HAMPSHIRE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

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BACKGROUND

On January 6, 1978, this Commission received an application from Portsmouth City Marshall, Stanton Remick for federal funding assistance in order to implement a Crime Prevention Program in that city. On that date the full Commission approved the request, thus establishing grant number 78-I-A 1948 B01 for the period January 31, 1978 - March 5, 1979. A grant adjustment was made on April 3, 1978 which changed the project implementation date from January 31, 1978 to January 6, 1978. Funds totaling \$18,558 were awarded with the following apportionment.

<u>FEDERAL</u>	<u>COMMISSION</u>	<u>SUBGRANTEE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
\$8,500	\$472	\$9,586	\$18,558

All funds were budgeted for personnel services to provide salary and fringe benefits for the Crime Prevention Officer who would implement and direct the program under the direction of the City Marshall.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Police and public concern over the increase in the rates of the crimes of burglary, theft and vandalism in the Portsmouth area prompted the effort to implement the Crime Prevention Program. The communities surrounding Portsmouth, which have relatively small police departments, who would benefit from such a program include: New Castle, Newington, and Greenland. The total population of the area to be served is approximately 26,000.

It was envisioned by Marshall Remick that the Office of Crime Prevention, within the Portsmouth Police Department, would develop and implement programs in the areas of: residential and commercial security, public information, education in schools, police patrol planning and crime pattern studies. Of particular import would be the public relations aspect of the project. It was proposed that

the Crime Prevention Officer (CPO) would work closely with fraternal, civic, religious, and educational organizations to aid in program implementation and to spark citizen interest. As stated in the grant application, the overall goal of the project is to reduce the incidence of crime in the categories of breaking and entering, burglary, theft and vandalism.

The Crime Prevention Officer was to be selected from the most qualified officers within the Portsmouth Police Department.

PROJECT OPERATION

Captain Raymond Labrie, a fourteen year veteran of the Portsmouth Police Department, was appointed by Marshall Remick to the position of Crime Prevention Officer. His outstanding record of service to the department and to the city, and his familiarity with factors related to the crime prevention effort made his selection a logical one. After assuming his duties as CPO on January 6, 1978, Captain Labrie attended the Crime Prevention School conducted at Pease Air Force Base between February 2nd and March 3rd, 1978.

Captain Labrie's initial efforts focused on the involvement of merchants and citizens in the Crime Prevention Program. Portsmouth radio station WBBX provided thirty second segments throughout each day in which tapes prepared by Captain Labrie were aired. Two such tapes per week were supplied to the station dealing primarily with crime prevention tips and crime reporting procedures. The Crime Prevention Officer has also established a weekly column in the Portsmouth Herald entitled "Know Your Police Department." Crime prevention topics are emphasized in the column and have included areas such as: theft from cars, residential burglary, shoplifting, rape prevention, delinquency prevention, pickpocketing, and purse snatching.

While the news media provides the opportunity to reach a great number of people, it does not provide the direct contact with the citizenry which is

essential to the success of the program. Toward this end, Captain Labrie has made numerous personal appearances to lecture to a variety of organizations on such subjects as: burglary and theft prevention, prevention of assault and rape, senior citizen crime prevention techniques, delinquency prevention, and prevention of shoplifting. During the first nine months of the project twenty-five such lectures have been presented. The audiences have included civic and fraternal organizations, senior citizen groups, and church and school groups. Captain Labrie estimates that through these functions, he has had important direct contact with 1,370 citizens in the service area.

An important aspect of the Crime Prevention Program is "Operation Identification". Through the news media and the lecture programs, citizens have been apprised of the importance of permanently affixing their driver's license number or other identification to valuable belongings. With the aid of volunteers, the CPO has thus far been able to supply engraving tools for the identification of highly "stealable" items in approximately one hundred homes. In addition, the Portsmouth Rehabilitation Center and a local church have inscribed all of their inventory items.

In the effort to combat the serious crime of shoplifting, Captain Labrie has delivered a total of eight seminars on the subject to management and employees of area business establishments. These presentations deal with detection and prevention of this crime. The seminars were well received by the more than one hundred fifty persons in attendance. In addition, the CPO relates that he has conducted training for the employees of all area department stores on detection and prevention of this crime.

At the present time a procedure is in effect in which all reports of business burglaries are received by the Crime Prevention Office. A check is then made against a list of businesses having alarm systems. If it is determined that a burglary has been committed against an establishment that has no alarm system,

a form letter and a booklet are immediately sent to that business describing various types of alarm systems available.

To help combat the crime of robbery, Captain Labrie has designed an identification card to be displayed in local business establishments. The cards provide for immediate description of a robber by the establishment proprietor or employee after the subject leaves the premises. The cards provide space for recording characteristics such as sex, race, age, weight, height and clothing description. There are also spaces for automobile description and direction of departure taken by the subject. The Portsmouth Police Department phone number is also displayed. The procedure is to call the police immediately following a robbery and then to fill in the card so that the police, upon arrival, can immediately dispatch the information to applicable units. The cards have been supplied to all small "corner" grocery stores, which are very susceptible to robbery. They are also displayed in all banks in Portsmouth.

Thus far in the project two Neighborhood Alert Programs have been established within the service area; another is currently being formed. In these programs citizens in a designated area or neighborhood cooperate in maintaining surveillance of the properties of those residents who are away from home for appreciable periods. Each resident has a roster of the names, addresses and phone numbers of all residents in that area. A neighborhood chief is designated to coordinate the surveillance and reporting activities of the group. Each group is instructed on procedures to follow to minimize the opportunity for burglary or vandalism of a vacant home.

In addition to the sub-programs which have thus far been implemented and described above, plans are being formulated for expansion of the programs in existence as well as for implementation of new programs. For example, Captain Labrie has arranged with the local cable television station to appear one night a week to discuss crime prevention topics. Also, the CPO is planning

to expand the Neighborhood Alert Program to include additional residential areas. The school lecture program will also be expanded to include new subjects in a concentrated effort to acquaint area youth with the problems of crime and delinquency.

A comprehensive residential and commercial security survey program is scheduled to get underway in the near future. The survey will determine the degree of security consciousness in both business establishments and residences as well as the measures needed to be taken to maximize physical security and awareness.

Captain Labrie plans to develop a program designed to train women in the use of firearms. This will include a training session covering such topics as gun safety, legal aspects of firearms use and actual firing of weapons.

Captain Labrie has established a good record keeping system which he uses to assess the value of the Crime Prevention Program. The following data, taken from his records, depicts the comparison of numbers of certain reported crimes for the period of March through October, 1978 with those crimes for the same period in 1977. (The period of March - October, 1978 represents the period of time for which data was compiled and recorded since the program's inception.)

<u>CRIME</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>% of increase or decrease</u>
Robbery	3	7	-46%
Residential Burglaries	124	70	-44%
Non-residential Burglaries	122	174	+43%
Larceny	574	469	-18%

The above table indicates an increase in reported crimes in only one area-- non-residential burglaries. (The total number of reported burglaries, residential and non-residential, however, was virtually the same for both periods.) Portsmouth police records do indicate though that for the last four months of the 1978 period there was a decrease of 12% in reported non-residential burglaries

compared with the same period in 1977. Captain Labrie expects the rate of decrease in this crime to improve as a result of planned future efforts in this area.

These statistics reflect dramatically on the efforts and accomplishments of the Crime Prevention Program in Portsmouth. In a program such as this, statistics often reflect an initial increase in the numbers of reported crimes. This is because the emphasis on crime reporting and on public awareness results in more crimes being reported before the effect of the program can result in a decrease of criminal acts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Captain Labrie exhibits a remarkable enthusiasm for and understanding of the crime problem in the Portsmouth area. In the relatively few short months of the Crime Prevention Program's existence he has established programs which are working and which have gained public confidence. Future plans for the program, when implemented, should enhance the crime prevention effort and it is reasonable to expect that statistics will continue to show a decrease in the crimes emphasized in the program.

Based on the demonstrated success of the project it is recommended that this Commission favorably consider renewal funding in accordance with established policy.

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