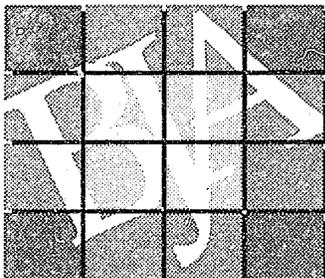


U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
Bureau of Justice Assistance



Bureau of Justice Assistance  
**Law Enforcement  
Task Force Evaluation  
Projects:  
Results and Findings  
in the States**

136697

U.S. Department of Justice  
National Institute of Justice

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## **FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS**

### **Law Enforcement Task Force Evaluation Projects:**

### **Results and Findings in the States**

Edited by

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with assistance from

Kellie J. Dressler

April 1992

**A Special Analysis Report of the  
National Consortium to Assess State Drug Control Initiatives**

**Prepared by the  
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## INTRODUCTION

When the U.S. Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Acts in 1986 and 1988, a principal goal was the development of drug control programs at the state and local levels. A large percentage of the Federal and state monies allotted under the acts was used to form multi-jurisdictional drug control task forces. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) supports the development of drug control program capabilities in the states through a variety of technical assistance and training programs. The National Consortium to Assess State Drug Control Initiatives, coordinated for BJA by the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA), represents a major technical assistance and training program aimed at drug program performance monitoring and strategy impact assessment.

For the past few years the National Consortium has developed performance-monitoring standards for multi-jurisdictional task forces. The National Consortium defines a multi-jurisdictional drug control task force as any drug law enforcement effort involving two or more law enforcement agencies. Task forces may involve multiple police agencies in the same county; cooperative arrangements between police agencies and prosecutors' offices; cooperation among state, local, or Federal law enforcement agencies; or multiple law enforcement agencies operating in two or more jurisdictions. Today there are over 1,000 multi-jurisdictional task forces in operation across the nation. Evaluation of task forces plays a crucial role in answering the following questions: Are task forces cost effective? What attributes of a task force contribute to or take away from a task force's success? Answers to these questions help to determine what works and what doesn't work in drug control programs.

The rapid buildup of multi-jurisdictional drug control task forces around the country also raises questions for policy makers concerning the goals and objectives of task forces, their operational activities, and their impact on the drug problem. JRSA, other private and public organizations, and the states are answering some of these questions through descriptive studies and evaluations of multi-jurisdictional task forces. Ongoing and recently completed studies focus on comparisons of the impact of drug enforcement task forces versus conventional narcotics enforcement techniques; comparisons of county-level multi-jurisdictional task forces within a single state; and examinations of task forces in rural settings and of multi-jurisdictional task forces operating in conjunction with other law enforcement entities.

This report reviews task force research conducted in 11 states between 1987 and 1991. The task force studies summarized in this report were identified by evaluation program staff at BJA based on reports submitted to BJA by the states. A majority of the states included in this report did not conduct controlled evaluation studies. Instead, these states studied the structure of task forces and their perceived benefits. Most of the studies used task force employee surveys to obtain descriptive information about task forces, such as size of operation and locations served. Survey questions sometimes covered changes in

drug statistics, organizational relations within the task forces, and the impact of task forces on drug activities. Some state evaluations focused on the achievement of task force goals; specifically, the goals of reducing drug availability and apprehending criminals.

Each state's task force research project is reviewed separately in this report, with information that includes the title of the research report, the year of publication, the author(s), and a brief description of the study including its major findings. In addition to the state-by-state summaries, a list of the study authors and their addresses and phone numbers is provided for those who wish to contact the researchers or obtain copies of their reports.

This report will be of interest to state officials monitoring and evaluating drug control task forces as well as to task force commanders and administrators. The task force research projects presented herein should encourage the sharing of substantive and methodological findings across state and local jurisdictions. Another goal of this report is to encourage states not currently submitting their evaluation reports to BJA to do so.

The National Consortium is currently conducting other research regarding multi-jurisdictional task forces in cooperation with BJA and many state and local jurisdictions. A 3-year report on task force activities will be published in the spring of 1992 and will include the results of a national survey of state officials on how they are organizing task forces. The National Consortium is also embarking on a new study of task forces, one that will assess how task force operations have been changing since Federal funding began under the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. The results of this research will be published in the fall of 1992. These efforts, along with the continuing task force research efforts in the states, will bring the nation closer to an understanding of how multi-jurisdictional task forces can be successful.

## COLORADO

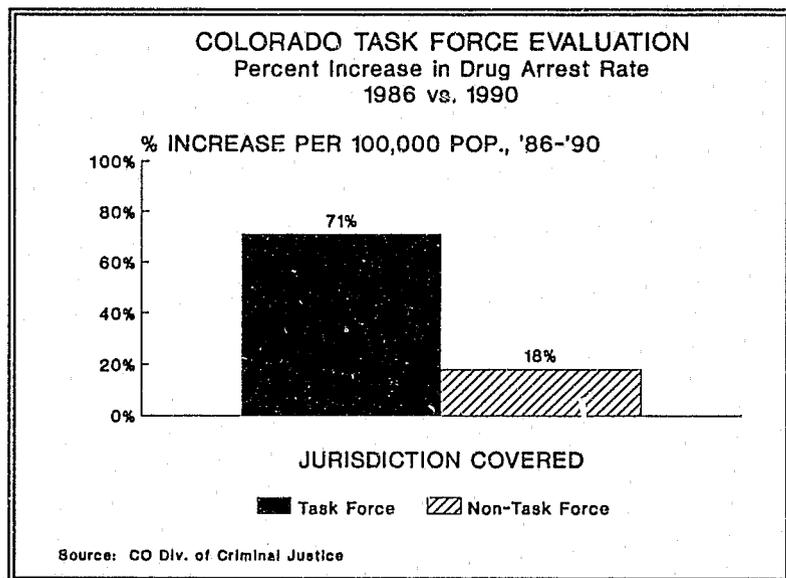
"Drug Task Forces in Colorado: An Evaluation of Multi-jurisdictional Strategies," 1991

Suzanne Kraus Pullen and Mary J. Mande, Ph.D.

Suzanne Kraus Pullen and Mary J. Mande, Office of Research and Statistics, Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, conducted an evaluation of five multi-jurisdictional task force efforts, representing the geographic regions of the state. This study employed both a process and outcome evaluation to assess the impact of task forces in Colorado. The evaluation consisted of interviews with community leaders as well as pre- and postarrest data. In addition to this evaluation, the Division of Criminal Justice contracted with an outside agency to conduct a mail-in survey of law enforcement agencies in Colorado (referred to as the Johnson study). This survey compared the differences between task force member agencies and nonmember agencies.

All five task forces in the Pullen and Mande study had the same three goals:

1. Arrest, prosecute, and convict drug users and drug dealers.
2. Target and seize the property of drug offenders.
3. Reduce the availability of drugs in the community.



## FINDINGS

### Drug Activities

- Uniform Crime Reports data indicated that drug arrests *in the task force jurisdictions* increased 30%–60% between 1986 and 1990. The Johnson study found that drug arrests per 100,000 population increased 71% between 1986 and 1990 for jurisdictions that participated in a task force, compared to 18% in non-task force jurisdictions.
- While the estimated dollar amounts of asset seizures vary, each of the task forces for which data were available had maintained the same level or increased the level of

asset seizures. The total estimated value of asset seizures for the five task forces increased more than 2000% from FY 1988-89 to FY 1989-90 (from \$244,925 to \$4,906,391).

- Drug seizure amounts fluctuated in each of the task force areas over the period studied, although it was difficult to assess the degree to which the availability of drugs had been reduced by the activities of the task forces. Interview data from task force members and Denver Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) data indicated that it was difficult to obtain certain types of drugs in the Denver metropolitan area during the time of this study. The Johnson study reported that task force representatives--compared to non-task force representatives--were much more likely to experience a greater proportion of drug transfer violations cleared by arrest.

#### Design Elements That Enhance Task Force Effectiveness

- **Board of directors:** Three of the five task forces created a board of directors to develop a structure for decision making and information sharing. Boards of directors eliminated duplication of effort, promoted a greater feeling of ownership among all participating task force agencies, and legitimized the task force entities. The task forces that did not have a board of directors experienced problems such as duplication of effort and lack of direction and coordination in investigations.
- **On-staff undercover agents:** In this study, on-staff undercover agents, compared to contract agents, were found to be more successful at furthering task force goals. The authors noted that this may be due to the uncertainty of the job for the contract worker. The absence of organizational commitment to the employee may result in a lack of commitment by the employee to the organization. Three of the task forces in this study hired contract undercover agents. All of these task forces experienced problems directly related to the use of contract employees that diminished task force productivity. Many of the contract undercover agents were from small towns and were often recognized by drug offenders while on the street.
- **Developed network of confidential informants:** A pool of reliable confidential informants greatly assisted drug task forces in gathering information and making successful drug arrests. These informants were found to be an effective and economical means of keeping up with the changing drug trade.
- **Clearly stated agreements, policies, and procedures:** None of the task forces in the study published policies and procedures manuals. All of the task force directors indicated that standard operating procedures and agreements were verbalized and understood by task force participants. Task force directors indicated that relying on verbal agreements could develop into a serious problem.

Pullen and Mande identified four elements of successful task force performance:

1. There must be a perceived benefit to all agencies involved in the task force.
2. Critical decision makers (i.e., police, district attorneys, and judges) must support multi-jurisdictional efforts.
3. The board of directors or other organizational entity must be an integral part of the task force structure.
4. Task forces must design a strategy for law enforcement that is appropriate to their demographic and geographic region.

## IDAHO

*"Evaluation of Drug Task Forces in Idaho," 1990*

Dawn Burns

*"Multi-jurisdictional Drug Task Forces in Idaho," 1990*

Roberta K. Silva and Steve Peters

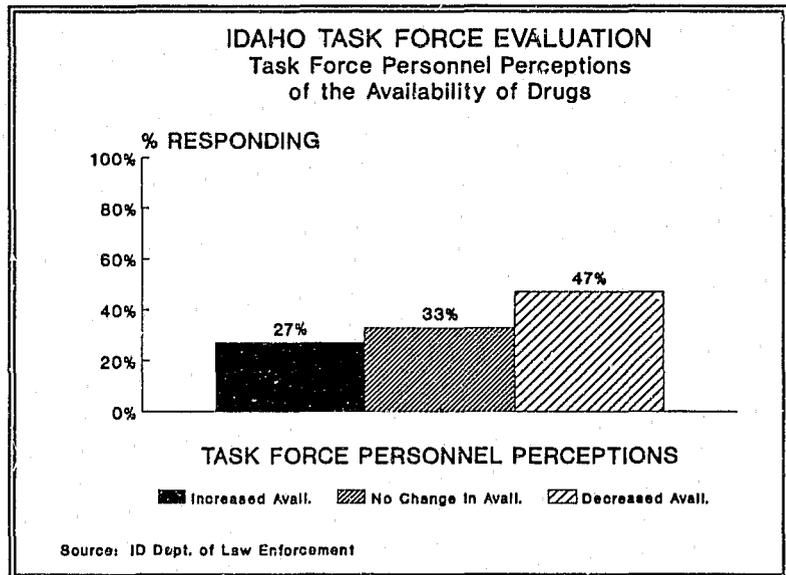
Dawn Burns, Roberta K. Silva, and Steve Peters, from the Idaho Department of Law Enforcement, examined 13 multi-jurisdictional task forces operating in Idaho. The authors collected process data (e.g., number of offenders arrested, convicted, and sentenced; number of investigators and size of population served; and operating costs) as well as survey data. This survey included questions ranging from the nature of task force operations to investigators' impressions of quantitative indicators.

Burns emphasized increased cooperation among participating law enforcement agencies and improved intelligence networking in her study findings. The collection of quantitative data proved problematic. Some of the information, such as task force size or number of convictions and sentences, was either unavailable or in constant flux, which made it difficult to interpret. Burns also noted that "task forces, regardless of assurances otherwise, feel that evaluation performance directly affects funding levels (e.g., the better the task force performance, the higher the funding)." It was concluded, consequently, that evaluations based solely on quantitative performance data might cause task forces to focus on satisfying evaluation criteria rather than stated goals and objectives. Burns also recommended that evaluators in other states continue to develop better evaluation criteria for multi-jurisdictional task forces.

Silva and Peters provided results from an opinion survey of task force law enforcement agency directors and staff. The purpose of the survey was to determine the impact of the multi-jurisdictional task force concept on the drug problem.

## FINDINGS

- 94% of project directors and staff stated that the drug intelligence network had improved and had reduced duplication of enforcement effort.
- 65% of the task force personnel felt goals were partially addressed, and 35% felt goals were fully addressed.
- 41% felt lack of personnel was an obstacle to addressing goals.
- 53% cited changes in the task forces' original objectives and goals.
- 27% perceived an increase in the availability of drugs in their area, 47% perceived a decrease in drug availability, and 33% reported no change in drug availability.
- 24% felt the goals and objectives of Federal agencies often differed from local goals and objectives.



## INDIANA

*"An Evaluation of the South Central Indiana and Tri-County Narcotics Task Forces," 1990*

Edmund McGarrell, Ph.D., and Kip Schlegel, Ph.D.

*"Multi-jurisdictional Drug Task Forces in Indiana: The First Two Years of Operations," 1990*

Michael J. Sabath, Ph.D., John P. Doyle, and John W. Ransburg

In their evaluation of two multi-jurisdictional task forces operating in Indiana, McGarrell and Schlegel focused on the impact of narcotics enforcement practices in the selected sites and on the structures and operations that the task forces used to achieve their stated missions (i.e., enhanced communication and coordination among local law

enforcement agencies and increased responsiveness to emerging sophisticated drug-trafficking activities). The authors used a pre-post research design with comparison groups. For both the control and treatment sites, data reflecting enforcement activities from the year prior to task force implementation to the year after implementation were collected. The authors also developed and administered a survey of approximately 200 law enforcement officers and prosecutors working within the task forces' jurisdictions. The survey elicited information on the nature of interaction, cooperation, and coordination that existed between the task forces and the local law enforcement agencies.

### INDIANA TASK FORCE EVALUATION Benefits Associated With Task Forces

- Better interagency cooperation
- More opportunities for becoming involved in major drug investigations
- More and better resources are available for drug enforcement

Source: IN Criminal Justice Institute

## FINDINGS

- A higher level of satisfaction with task force participation was found among personnel in the task force with three contributing county agencies than in the task force that was centered in a single county and provided services to five surrounding counties.
- Task force officials reported better interagency communication than did law enforcement officials in control sites (i.e., sites without task forces).

- Task forces became involved in major drug investigations and reported that they did not believe this would have come about had the task forces not been instituted.
- The integrity of key task force personnel was crucial to the effectiveness of a task force, avoiding problems due to interagency rivalries and the potential for corruption.
- Both task forces were involved with asset seizures and forfeitures. The authors found that forfeiture proceeds were unlikely to fully support task force operations.
- Considerable attention should be given to ongoing interagency communication to ensure the development of a cooperative regional drug control effort.

Michael J. Sabath, Ph.D., Director, John P. Doyle, and John W. Ransburg, Center for Criminal Justice Research and Information, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, reviewed the first 2 years (1988 and 1989) of operations for 25 task forces in Indiana. This review consists of task force objectives and goals and a task force survey. Among the goals were the following:

- **Arrest and bring to trial drug traffickers and dealers as well as drug users:** Between 1988 and 1989 there was virtually no change in the percentage of arrests for various drugs associated with the most serious drug charges made against offenders. Cocaine arrests accounted for the greatest percentage of arrests in both years, followed by arrests for marijuana and other controlled substances. Overall, there was a 78% increase in the number of drug arrests made by task forces between 1988 and 1989. This amounted to an increase of 877 arrests. Only a small number (99) of these were attributable to the six task forces that began receiving support from the Institute in 1989. Sixteen of the nineteen task forces operating in 1988 and 1989 reported increases in the number of drug arrests they made.
- **Develop narcotics intelligence systems for targeting drug investigation and enforcement efforts:** Eighty-six percent of task force directors thought there had been improvement in the development of drug intelligence networks for targeting drug enforcement efforts. Although a few task force directors pointed to difficulties working with other Federal, state, or local law enforcement agencies, most seemed to be satisfied with progress in this area.
- **Remove drugs from jurisdictions or severely limit their availability:** Seizures and purchases of nonplant marijuana, amphetamines, LSD, and other controlled substances increased between 1988 and 1989, while seizures and purchases of cocaine, hashish, heroin, and plant marijuana decreased. The greatest percent increases were in amphetamine seizures and purchases (1067%) and LSD seizures and purchases (863%). The greatest percent decreases were in hashish (-91%) and cocaine (-75%).

**INDIANA TASK FORCE ARRESTS**  
**Comparison of Drug Arrests by Type of Drug**  
**for 1988 and 1989**

| <u>Drug Type</u> | <u>1988</u>  | <u>1989</u>  | <u>% Change</u> |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Cocaine          | 554          | 1,011        | 82%             |
| Marijuana        | 397          | 678          | 71              |
| Amphetamines     | 64           | 107          | 67              |
| LSD              | 29           | 87           | 200             |
| Heroin           | 24           | 14           | -42             |
| <u>Other</u>     | <u>57</u>    | <u>105</u>   | <u>84</u>       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>1,125</b> | <b>2,002</b> | <b>78%</b>      |

- **Establish cooperative enforcement networks among criminal justice agencies:** Most task force directors (96%) thought there had been an improvement in communication and cooperation among law enforcement agencies since the development of the drug task forces.
- **Seize the property of convicted drug offenders:** In 1989, 458 seizures with an estimated value of nearly \$3.3 million were made. The number of asset seizures increased 16% over the 2 years, while the estimated value of assets seized in 1989 was 125% more than the estimated value of assets seized in 1988.

According to the authors, most task forces indicated that they targeted high-level drug dealers and cocaine. Marijuana, LSD, methamphetamine, and heroin were also considered high-priority drug targets. Task force directors expressed concern about inter-jurisdictional jealousies and turf consciousness among law enforcement agencies and their impact on operations. Many also reported difficulties complying with grant application and reporting requirements; problems managing asset seizures and forfeitures; and problems finding and keeping reliable drug informants.

Task force directors perceived three principal benefits of task force operations:

1. More and better resources were available for drug enforcement.
2. Communications improved among law enforcement agencies.
3. Task force efforts produced an improved capacity to identify and target drug dealers.

## IOWA

*"Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Law Enforcement Task Forces: A Description and Implementation Guide," 1991*

Dennis Wiggins

This report was written for the Iowa Governor's Alliance on Substance Abuse (GASA), which is Iowa's administrating agency for the Drug Control and System Improvement Grant Program. The report presented a description of multi-jurisdictional drug law enforcement task forces and discussed the impact task forces have had on individual agencies' abilities to detect and arrest drug offenders.

### IOWA TASK FORCE EVALUATION

#### Improvements Found in Drug Law Enforcement

- Increased development of drug intelligence
- Better quality of drug cases
- More communication and cooperation among law enforcement agencies
- Decreased drug availability
- Increased prosecution of drug cases

Source: IA Div. of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning

The Department of Human Rights, Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP), conducted two surveys of law enforcement personnel across the State of Iowa. The first survey was distributed to each active member of the 17 grant-funded multi-jurisdictional drug law enforcement task forces in Iowa. The intent of the survey was to aid in the description of each task force's composition, operation, impact, and development. As a complement to this survey, a second, similar data collection instrument was developed and distributed to a random sample of Iowa's municipal and county law enforcement agencies not involved in a grant-funded multi-jurisdictional task force. CJJP also conducted a study of three grant-funded task forces. Sites were chosen based on geographic location, jurisdictional demographics, and task force experience.

## FINDINGS

### Task Force Organization

- 13 of the 17 grant-funded task forces cover 1-3 counties, while 3 cover 6-10 counties. One task force in Iowa maintains statewide jurisdiction.

- Multi-jurisdictional task forces in Iowa with larger geographic jurisdictions tend to be located in rural areas of the state, while urban areas generally elect to form single-county task forces.
- Over 70% of the task forces involve 1–5 agencies. Overall, the task forces range in size from those with only 1 agency (as in the Division of Narcotics Enforcement Task Force) to those with 32 (as in the North Central Iowa Narcotics Task Force).
- The average task force has at least one full-time or part-time officer from a member agency who oversees the daily operations.
- 16 of Iowa's 17 task forces involve both county and municipal law enforcement agencies, and 9 task forces incorporate the county or U.S. attorney's office as a participating agency.
- The majority of task forces do not target a specific drug or type of drug offender. For those that did indicate specific targets, cocaine, crack, and methamphetamine were listed as high-priority drugs, while distributors, street dealers, gangs, and repeat offenders were indicated as the types of drug offenders targeted.
- Each task force has a governing board, usually called an executive committee, that meets on a quarterly or monthly basis. Responsibilities of the board include resource management, project evaluation, and general oversight of the investigations conducted by the task force.

## SURVEY RESPONSES

### The Scope of the Drug Problem

- Law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel often cited alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine as the most problematic drugs in Iowa. Heroin, PCP, and LSD were generally not considered problematic.
- 64% of those surveyed indicated that violent crime had increased in the past 2 years as a result of drug abuse. Urban respondents consistently perceived the drug problem to be more serious than did their rural peers.

### Task Force Impact on Drug Law Enforcement

- Law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel associated with a multi-jurisdictional task force consistently reported a higher degree of satisfaction and improvement in the following areas of drug law enforcement: increased development of drug

intelligence; better quality of drug cases; more communication and cooperation among law enforcement agencies; decreased drug availability; and increased prosecution of drug cases.

### Obstacles to Drug Law Enforcement

- CJJP staff presented law enforcement and prosecutorial personnel with a list of "common obstacles to drug law enforcement." Individuals associated with multi-jurisdictional task forces consistently indicated fewer problems with the proposed obstacles than those not associated with a task force. Sixty-eight percent of task force survey respondents felt that lenient criminal sentences and lack of investigative personnel were the most serious obstacles. Fifty percent of the respondents also cited lack of vehicles as an obstacle to drug law enforcement. Other obstacles such as lack of confidential funds, lack of equipment, insufficient coordination with other law enforcement agencies, and lack of drug education/prevention programs were considered less serious problems.

### MASSACHUSETTS

*"Joint State/City Task Force on Drugs and Violence:  
Analysis of a Multi-Level Task Force," 1991*

William M. Holmes, Ph.D., and Elizabeth Dillon

The Massachusetts Task Force on Drugs and Violence conducted a process evaluation of the Joint State/City Task Force funded by the Anti-Drug Abuse and System Improvement Act formula grant program. The aim of the task force project was to coordinate efforts of the Massachusetts State Police, the Boston Police, the Suffolk County District Attorney's

Office, and the courts to remove violent offenders from the streets of Boston; to increase the certainty of their punishment; and to incapacitate them. The task force targeted three groups of offenders: offenders arrested for the unlawful carrying of a firearm, gang

#### MASSACHUSETTS STRIKE FORCE EVALUATION Benefits Observed in the Strike Force

- Regular task force meetings helped clarify the responsibilities of contributing agencies
- Regular meetings also served an important political function by combining state and local law enforcement agencies
- The strike force helped remove serious violent offenders from the streets by targeting warrant defaulters, gang members, and gun law violators

Source: MA Task Force on Drugs and Violence

members, and violent fugitives.

In order for the task force to operate, warrants had to be prioritized, state and city efforts had to be coordinated, and a Violent Fugitive Arrest Squad (VFAS) had to be organized. The VFAS was comprised of state police officers assigned specific duties for tracking down violent offenders for whom a warrant had been issued. VFAS concentrated on offenders who were thought or known to have committed serious violent crimes.

The Joint State/City Task Force evaluation relied on qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data consisted of verbal reports from task force members, direct conversations, and examination of project documents. The quantitative information involved a baseline description, periodic status updates, and measures of the project outcomes. Quantitative measures included statistics on wanted individuals found, arrested, disposed, tried, convicted, sentenced, incarcerated, and with warrants cleared. Progress in the project was monitored by the number of offenders apprehended.

Several meetings involving different task force participants were held regularly to coordinate the flow of the project. The Joint State/City Task Force met on a bimonthly basis to facilitate communication and to create and monitor a plan of action that would reduce the increasing gun violence. Problems, concerns, and progress of the task force were discussed once a week with members of the State Police, the Boston Police, the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, the Administrative Office of the Trial Court, the Governor's Legal Counsel, and the Massachusetts Committee on Criminal Justice. Every 6-8 weeks, meetings were held with then Governor Michael S. Dukakis to discuss project problems and current statistics.

## FINDINGS

- Task force meetings helped clarify the responsibilities of the participating agencies. In addition, they fulfilled a political function in combining state forces with the city of Boston.
- The cooperative project among state, county, and criminal justice agencies helped remove serious offenders from the streets. At the study's conclusion, of 188 targeted defaulters, less than 20 remained at large in the Commonwealth. Many of the more violent gang members were incarcerated. Gang violence significantly decreased, and almost all of the gun-carrying violators were located, arrested, found guilty, and incarcerated.

## MINNESOTA

*"Minnesota 1990 Narcotics Task Forces At-a-Glance," 1991*

Daniel Storkamp and Michelle Powell

The Minnesota Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center surveyed a sample of coordinators and officers from Minnesota's 26 multi-jurisdictional narcotics task forces. Two copies of the survey were mailed to each of the task forces. One was completed by the coordinator of the task force, while the other was completed by a task force officer. Data from the survey were used to assess the impact of the 26 task forces on the state's efforts to combat drug trafficking and crime at the local level.

### FINDINGS

- Respondents felt that task forces were a successful component of drug control and that they increased coordination and cooperation among all agencies.
- Respondents believed that the task force program was a very successful drug control strategy at the street level and that the task forces were highly effective in all local drug enforcement activities, specifically in identifying, arresting, and prosecuting street-level dealers.
- Respondents cited increases in cooperation and coordination among agencies and an increase in officer experience as the primary benefits of the narcotics task force program. Over 90% of the surveyed task force members reported that cooperation between the narcotics task forces and local law enforcement agencies increased during 1990.
- The obstacles most often cited by respondents were lack of available personnel, personnel not assigned to the task force for specific amounts of time, and lack of funds.

## MISSOURI

*"A Descriptive Evaluation Report of Multi-jurisdictional Drug Task Forces in Missouri," 1991*

James F. Gilsinan, Ph.D., and Mary Domahidy, Ph.D.

This report provides a description of multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement task forces operating in Missouri that received funding from the Narcotics Control Assistance Program (NCAP).

Initial meetings with Department of Public Safety staff led to an agreement that the task forces to be studied would be those funded in FY 1991. This decision was necessary for several reasons. First, some of the task forces funded initially in 1987 did not receive subsequent grants, due in part to a 67% cut in overall funds for 1988. Also, some task forces received funds only in 1 year, but were permitted to draw upon those funds until depleted. A total of 30 projects were studied.

The authors point out that "multi-jurisdictional" can mean a county sheriff's department working with municipal police; municipal police departments working together; and both of these plus state and Federal agencies such as the Missouri Highway Patrol, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), or the Coast Guard. In addition, a local prosecutor may be a formal part of the task force or may play a more informal role. Researchers reviewed documents and program narratives prepared in accord with funding requirements. They supplemented narratives with interviews of persons familiar with the task force projects; typically, they were either the project director or the supervisor of the task force. In addition, researchers conducted personal interviews of three St. Louis task force contacts to further understand the nature of task force efforts in Missouri. Twenty-nine interviews were conducted.

## FINDINGS

- For operational activities, intelligence-gathering operations occupy most of the task forces' time, followed by undercover buys and surveillance. Under the category of administrative activities, crime reports require the most time.
- Prosecutor involvement in task forces ranges from the traditional gatekeeper role of selecting cases for prosecution through observation of task force activity to organization and management of the task force.

Two strategies for moving toward task force self-sufficiency were observed:

1. A special tax to support drug enforcement (Jackson and Buchanan Counties).
2. Asset seizures and forfeitures.

Measures of success are primarily organizational (e.g., number of arrests) rather than environmental (e.g., drug-overdose hospital admissions).

While Federal guidelines allow for innovative strategies to address local drug problems, standardization and use of traditional law enforcement practices were reported. However, certain task forces are clearly innovative and provide long-range potential for national models (e.g., river interdiction in St. Louis and active community involvement in Kansas City).

Task forces in rural areas reported drug problems involving clandestine methamphetamine labs or marijuana cultivating and harvesting. Task forces operating in urban areas addressed comprehensive drug problems including cocaine, crack, and marijuana.

Respondents noted that task forces work with other agencies such as the Highway Patrol and Federal interdiction agencies, particularly the DEA. St. Louis-area respondents were most likely to mention working with Federal agents. Personal contacts established over time facilitated interaction among agencies.

The majority of task forces employ between 4 and 10 individuals and have a governing board comprised of department heads from the participating agencies. Governing boards perform functions such as reviewing monthly reports, discussing tactical problems, and approving officers. Over half of the governing boards meet monthly, and many meet more often than that.

Officers received training from a number of agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Agency school, the Highway Patrol, and the University of Missouri, as well as on-the-job training.

More than half of the respondents replied that supervisors had extensive law enforcement supervision and/or undercover experience. Over half of those interviewed reported daily contact between officers and supervisors. Formal daily meetings were more characteristic of the larger task forces and those in urban areas.

## NEBRASKA

*"Multi-jurisdictional Drug Task Forces in Nebraska," 1991*

Michael Overton and Michele Borg Evans

The first multi-jurisdictional task forces in Nebraska--Compact for the Apprehension of Narcotic Dealers and Offenders (CANDO), Lincoln/Lancaster County Investigative Narcotics Cooperative, North Central, and the Tri-County Narcotics Enforcement Program (TRICEP)--were established in 1987 with funding from the Federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986. The success experienced by these early task forces sparked the interest of other law enforcement agencies that banded together to form additional task forces during 1989 and 1990. Nine task

forces are currently operational, eight of which receive continued Federal funding. Additionally, the Nebraska State Patrol receives funding for the Mid- and Upper-Level Enforcement (MULE) Program, a statewide drug investigation team.

The evaluation of multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Nebraska thus far has been twofold; it consists of developing descriptive summaries and statistical overviews of funded task forces. The methodology for developing the descriptive narratives was direct observation and open-ended, on-site interviews with project personnel. Thirty-nine on-site interviews were conducted with the eight funded task force projects from September 10, 1990, through February 22, 1991. The statistical data included in the first evaluation report were collected from the task forces for 1989 and 1990.

### NEBRASKA TASK FORCE EVALUATION Benefits and Impacts of Drug Task Forces

- Agencies involved in and personnel available for drug enforcement increased, available resources expanded, and intelligence sharing increased
- Task force operations improved law enforcement's understanding of the extent of the drug problem in project areas
- Officers noted changes in youths' attitudes toward drug use and recognized the importance of coupling education with law enforcement
- Officers noted an increase in the public's awareness of their efforts
- Law enforcement personnel needs increased, as did those of county attorneys, the courts, and probation officials
- Jails and prisons experienced overcrowding, and budgets were strained throughout the criminal justice system

Source: NE Comm. on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

## FINDINGS

- Target groups for the majority of the task forces were street-level dealers and their direct suppliers. The task forces' enforcement efforts were designed for the local level. Cases that go above the task forces' targeted levels are turned over to the Nebraska State Patrol or Federal law enforcement agencies.
- Interagency cooperation was noted as the most significant factor in implementing the task force projects successfully. The primary weaknesses in implementation included lack of information and comprehensive statistical data about task force projects at the onset, lack of experience in drug enforcement, and the unwillingness of some agencies to participate and commit to the projects.
- The number of agencies involved in task force projects and the number of personnel available for drug enforcement increased, available resources expanded, the sharing of intelligence information increased, and the availability of drugs was perceived to have decreased.
- Open communication between law enforcement agencies was viewed as crucial in achieving task force results. Community support, commitment to the projects, sufficient resources, and continuing the task force strategy were also noted as important in achieving drug enforcement results.
- Respondents noted a greater understanding of the extent of the drug problem in the project areas, a newfound capability to keep pace with the drug problem, changes in youths' attitudes toward drug use, and recognition of the importance of education being coupled with drug enforcement. Reducing the demand for illegal drugs through education was viewed as critical in realizing a long-term impact on the drug problem.
- Marijuana, cocaine, LSD, and methamphetamine were mentioned in rank order as the most prevalent types of drugs. Marijuana accounted for over half of the arrests, followed by cocaine and stimulants.
- The impact on law enforcement agencies involved in task force projects included an increase in the public's awareness of their efforts and an increase in the need for additional personnel. County attorneys, the courts, and probation departments reported an increase in their caseloads, a backlog of cases, and personnel shortages. Jails and prisons experienced overcrowding due to an increase in incarcerated drug offenders. The increase in the number of drug offenders resulted in unanticipated expenses that strained budgets throughout the criminal justice system.

## NEW JERSEY

*"Examining Multi-Jurisdictional Narcotics Task Forces: An Evaluation of New Jersey Projects Funded Under the Anti-Drug Abuse Acts of 1986 and 1988," 1990*

Donald Rebovich, Ph.D., Christine Harttraft, John Krimmel, and Pamela Shram

Donald Rebovich, Ph.D., et al. conducted an analysis of multi-jurisdictional task forces in New Jersey, the goal of which was to analyze task force characteristics through the examination of quantitative and qualitative data collected from New Jersey's 21 countywide task forces. This research entailed quarterly analysis of task force process data for 1988 (1/1/88 to 1/1/89) collected from all 21 task forces, along with data from interviews of a sample of task force personnel.

The study posed two questions: (1) What overall picture of the state's countywide narcotics task forces could be drawn from a research effort concentrated on their law enforcement activities, and (2) when combined with qualitative data elicited from task force personnel, what are some of the implications of task force policies on drug control efforts?

New Jersey's research found three major dichotomies that helped in understanding task force dimensions:

1. **Emerging vs. established task forces:** This dichotomy refers to the length of time the task force has existed. "Emerging" task forces were those created as part of the implementation of the New Jersey Attorney General's Action Plan for Narcotics Enforcement, with the infusion of funds from the BJA Federal formula grant. "Established" task forces were those in effect before BJA funding. Another major dichotomy emerged--rural vs. urban task forces. Rural task forces tended to be synonymous with emerging task forces, while urban task forces were usually synonymous with established task forces.
2. **Prosecutor-participative vs. prosecutor-detached management:** "Prosecutor-participative" task forces were those closely supervised by a prosecutor. When the prosecutor either passively or overtly delegated a large degree of management duties, then that task force was designated as "prosecutor-detached."
3. **Open system vs. traditional law enforcement orientations:** This distinction refers to the extent to which the task force adopted community roles beyond those of "traditional" drug enforcement functions. Traditional task forces utilized the majority of their resources and planning on basic law enforcement functions. "Open system" task forces emulated proactive policing strategies because they were concerned not only with traditional enforcement functions, but also with strategies that attempted to negate the causes of drug crime.

According to the authors, "The foremost finding is that while the state's twenty-one task forces have many similarities, it is their differences that help to determine their enforcement and management orientations and aid us in predicting their level of policy success."

## FINDINGS

- Emerging task forces tended to operate in stable environments involving relatively predictable crime trends, a steady public demand for the units' resources, and early predictability of resource allocation. Emerging task forces developed clear, precise plans concentrating on long-term, wide-spanning goals and objectives.
- Established task forces tended to operate in turbulent environments involving changes in criminal activity by type, region, and volume. These changes produced more pressing demands for quick decision making on resource allocation issues. Established task forces continually adjusted job responsibilities to meet changing circumstances and were committed to the organization's immediate tasks and short-term objectives instead of the long-term goals.
- The most effective task forces based enforcement strategies on two criteria: (1) building strong coalitions with state law enforcement, Federal law enforcement, and funding agencies and (2) maximizing and channeling the contributions of each participant toward the support of task force enforcement efforts.
- The most proficient task forces utilized community coalitions in order to fine-tune the communities' capacities for self-defense and self-help, thus alleviating the task forces' burdens of battling drug trafficking alone.
- Innovative task forces instituted various types of proactive mechanisms, such as confidential "tip-lines" and drug education within their official policy programs.
- Planning was an essential element for all task forces. The degree and type of planning determined many of the goals and strategies employed by the individual units. Planning strategies were often contingent upon the circumstances necessitating law enforcement intervention.
- Established task forces spent a great deal of time focusing on "localized crises" and an immediate response to drug crime. Sophisticated training tactics were viewed by the established task forces as necessary to compete with advances in offender methods of crime commission and detection avoidance.

## NORTH CAROLINA

*"An Evaluation: Narcotics Task Forces in North Carolina," 1991*

Robert J. Paciocco

The Mid-East Commission, a regional planning agency, conducted an evaluation of narcotics task forces in North Carolina for the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission. The report presents the results of a survey that was sent to all task forces that were recipients of drug enforcement funding in North Carolina from 1987 to 1990. The survey addressed the pros and cons of multi-jurisdictional collaborations. Followup interviews were conducted for grants that expired on or before June 30, 1991.

### FINDINGS

#### Task Force Profile

- The most common reason for developing a task force was increased drug activity, followed by the availability of funding and increased drug-related crime. Initiators tended to be police chiefs and sheriffs.
- 81% of the task forces would not have been developed without Federal funding assistance.
- 50% of the task forces were multicounty/multicity. Thirty-nine percent entailed only one county. The rest were two-county and three-county operations. Seventy percent of the personnel were employed full-time.
- Nearly half of North Carolina's task forces were composed of law enforcement agencies and other criminal justice agencies (usually the district attorney's office).
- Routine task force operations were most likely to be directed by a law enforcement officer already on staff at one of the participating agencies and assigned to narcotics or vice work. In most cases, major operational decisions were made and conflicts were resolved by a board of directors or an executive committee.
- Task forces typically served one county with several cities, with a total constituency of 100,000-250,000 persons.
- Task force personnel typically consisted of five or six full-time narcotics agents--most of whom were on loan from participating agencies--coordinated by a director from the lead participating agency. Leadership was derived from group consensus.

- Task forces tended to arrest between 150 and 200 offenders each year, primarily lower-level dealers who were used to make cases against higher-level dealers and conspirators.

- After a 2-year grant, the task forces will probably continue, but on a reduced scale through mutual aid assistance from some portion of the original participants. If original participants drop out, it may be the result of organizational stress or political turnover.

**NORTH CAROLINA TASK FORCE EVALUATION**  
Profile of Task Forces

- Routine task force operations were usually directed by a law enforcement officer, while major operational decisions were made by a board of directors or an executive committee
- Task forces typically served a single county with several cities, with a total population of 100,000-250,000
- A typical task force was composed of five or six full-time narcotics agents on loan from participating agencies and was coordinated by a task force director (usually from the largest participating agency)
- After 2 years of Federal funding assistance (a limit imposed by North Carolina), many task forces will probably continue on a reduced scale

Source: NC Governor's Crime Commission

#### Respondents' Views on Task Forces

- Positive aspects of task forces cited by respondents were better working relationships among law enforcement agencies and shared personnel and resources. Task forces also created professional freedom to concentrate efforts on drug-related targets.
- Respondents believed that task forces reduced crime and developed better citizen awareness.
- Respondents believed that task forces needed to focus on common goals. Establishing a central office, encouraging more agency cooperation, and holding regular meetings were suggested to help the task forces focus on common goals.
- Respondents felt that difficulties associated with task forces included the inability to find experienced personnel; jurisdictional restraints; competing drug enforcement units; and ineffective communication and leadership from the district attorney's office.

## OREGON

### *"An Evaluation of the Oregon National Guard's Participation in Statewide Drug Law Enforcement," 1990*

Robert A. Jackson

Robert A. Jackson evaluated the Oregon National Guard's involvement in statewide narcotics law enforcement. Jackson focused on how the Guard was used in enforcement efforts, how effective the Guard's assistance was in combating the narcotics problem, and whether and to what extent the Guard should be used in future drug law enforcement efforts.

Jackson analyzed data from questionnaires distributed to law enforcement and National Guard personnel, telephone surveys of Portland residents, and interviews with representatives from state, local, and Federal law enforcement agencies. This information was used to develop recommendations for future National Guard involvement in statewide drug control strategies.

## FINDINGS

- National Guard involvement was found to be helpful to statewide drug enforcement, and thus increased Guard involvement within the task forces on a more regular basis was recommended.
- The Guard's services were found to be utilized in different ways in different areas of the state. In rural areas, the National Guard provided intelligence support, participated in destroying marijuana fields, and provided surveillance of clandestine drug labs. In the Portland area, the Guard assisted in major street-level enforcement operations, intelligence gathering, clerical functions, and computer support.
- Jackson found deficiencies in data needed for task force evaluations and recommended more detailed and accurate reporting procedures to measure economic costs and performance benefits for National Guard involvement.

## SUMMARY

This report found variation in the approaches taken by the states to study and evaluate task forces. Most states conducted surveys of task force personnel and other state and law enforcement officials to gather information about task force structures and operations as well as to learn about respondents' impressions of task force impact on the drug problem. Most states also analyzed data on task force activities and outputs as a means of describing task force operations. Few states have conducted controlled or comparative task force evaluations to date. While such studies are difficult to implement, it is critical that they be undertaken. Without focused evaluation research, we will not advance our understanding of what efforts are most effective with regard to multi-jurisdictional drug task forces.

The research and evaluations of task forces conducted by the 11 states represented in this report have helped identify common characteristics and experiences of multi-jurisdictional drug control task forces. This research has revealed characteristics that help make task forces successful as well as common difficulties in their implementation. Some studies stressed that preparing written task force policies and procedures manuals was critical to the success of task forces. Constant communication through regularly held meetings about task force goals and operations was also deemed important. Common difficulties encountered with task force implementation included lack of funds and skilled personnel; the inadequacy of forfeiture proceeds to fully support task force operations; problems conducting undercover operations in rural areas; and the dynamic nature of task force goals and objectives in response to local drug problems.

Several states found that cooperation improved among the law enforcement agencies involved in task forces. Because of this new level of cooperation and coordination, organized intelligence sharing and understanding of local drug problems increased. The duplication of investigative efforts--unavoidable when multiple agencies are working independently on the same problem--diminished.

The states continue to fund multi-jurisdictional task force efforts with Federal assistance. As experience and documented research findings accumulate, state and local evaluators and program administrators will make significant contributions to our understanding of how task forces work and why the multi-jurisdictional task force model is effective.

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## **National Consortium to Assess State Drug Control Initiatives**

The National Consortium is a state-federal partnership project, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, that provides technical assistance and training to state offices engaged in the development, monitoring, and evaluation of state drug control strategies.

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