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SHOCAP

Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program

**PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION  
GUIDE  
GO-CAP**

Gang Component  
of  
SHOCAP

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## INTRODUCTION

The United States courts operate on what has come to be regarded as a two track system of justice. From the moment a juvenile commits a crime, his path through the justice system differs substantially from that of an adult who may have committed the same crime. The juvenile system, based on "parens patriae," is designed intentionally to let juvenile offenders become "invisible." The system is generally acceptable because of the notion that children who get into trouble are too young to be responsible for their actions and need a second chance to grow up.

The difficulty, however, is that the juvenile justice system is designed for non-serious juvenile offenders. Yet, according to recent statistics, juveniles account for about one-third of all serious crimes committed each year in the United States. Annually, nearly 2,000 juveniles are arrested for murder; 4,000 for rape; and more than 34,000 for aggravated assault. The vast majority of these violent crimes are committed by a small number of serious habitual juvenile offenders. Although such juvenile offenders represent less than one percent of the juvenile population, they are responsible for most of the juvenile-related crime.

Discretion and diversion, two mainstays of the juvenile justice system, both play into the hands of a juvenile serious habitual offender. A police officer, for example, can exercise discretion when a juvenile is stopped on the street. That same juvenile may have been stopped by other officers on other shifts; yet, if the officers choose not to write any type of report, then no one else in the system is even aware that any action has taken place. Just as police officers practice discretion, so do prosecutors and court intake workers (whether or not to file, reduce charges, etc.); judges (to accept a plea, dismiss a charge, etc.); and correctional personnel (choosing the type of facility, permitting home visits and furloughs, etc.). Such discretion, however well-intentioned, can often mean that no comprehensive record of a juvenile's activity is available; hence, such juveniles can fall through the cracks of the system.

Research projects and informal surveys of over 1,500 juvenile officers who attended a nationwide training program sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center have confirmed the following breakdown of juvenile justice system transactions.

For every 1,000 young persons in contact with police, 10 percent or 100 are arrested. Police commonly drop charges or reprimand about 50 percent of these, leaving 50 cases. Of the 50 cases formally presented to the court intake, only about 50 percent or 25 are sent forward. Unless a young offender has been arrested before, or the immediate offense is serious, less than 50 percent

or 12 will be referred to the court. Less than 50 percent of the cases presented result in adjudication or determination of delinquent status. This means that only six accused delinquents will be found guilty and sentenced. Of the six sentenced, five will probably be placed on probation. This leaves only one juvenile out of the 1,000 who will be confined to a correctional facility.

Were some of those other 99 who were arrested, but not incarcerated, serious habitual offenders? Chances are they were, and they were allowed to fall through the cracks. In recent years, members of the juvenile justice community have come to recognize that, when dealing with serious chronic offenders, the safety of the community must be considered.

A 1982 RAND Corporation report titled, "Varieties of Criminal Behavior," analyzed the results of a series of career criminal studies. One major conclusion of the report was the need to emphasize early juvenile offending patterns as the most important predictor of future behavior. Another conclusion was that official criminal records are too limited to use in accurate prediction. The study recommended that "prosecutors might be able to distinguish between predators and others if they had access to school records and other appropriate information about juveniles."

Thus, while criminal activity peaks between the ages of 16 and 17, most career criminals are not identified until approximately age 22. Figure 1, the Conceptual Model: Serious Habitual Criminal Evolution, identifies the evolutionary phase of the serious habitual offender and the lack of services provided to this population in the critical window of 18 to 22 years of age.

In most states the components of the juvenile justice system include the police, prosecutor, judge, and probation/parole/social services. Many of these agencies and officials have coexisted for years; yet, most are totally unaware of how the others operate. They are unaware of the problems and needs of other components of the system. They are unaware of the information each component collects and how it is used.

Any cooperation or communication between agencies is stimulated on a personal basis. The danger inherent in this informal process is that it is never institutionalized. Consequently, it is subject to change without notice, especially if a personnel change takes place.

Recently, however, a more integrated, interagency approach to dealing with juveniles has begun to emerge. This "systems approach" to juvenile crime encourages input from all relevant agencies and organizations in order that informed, accurate decisions can be made regarding the future path for a juvenile.

Until now, this approach was used only with serious habitual offenders. However, with the GO-CAP program, this interagency model has been brought to bear on the problem of gangs.

GO-CAP is a focused response to the emerging problem of a gang presence in small and mid-size cities. It is a comprehensive, department-wide information and case management process which enables law enforcement to gather and analyze gang-related information for both tactical and strategic responses to gang activity. A major goal of GO-CAP is to enlist the patrol resources in a department as a 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year major tactical element of gang suppression, control, and supervision. Thus, this ongoing gang information and suppression program should be a shared department responsibility with patrol force backing and orientation.

### Nature of the Problem

The gang problem is not new. Gangs have flourished in this country for at least 150 years. During the mid-19th century, the White Rabbit Gang was so active in New York City that it was largely responsible (in 1858) for the New York City Police Department's decision to arm itself.

In the intervening period, police have continued to arm themselves with increasingly sophisticated weapons, and gangs have continued to organize, arm themselves, and expand their territories across the country.

In the past, only large cities (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles) faced gang problems. But, in recent years, law enforcement and community officials have seen the street gang problem spread to mid-size and even small cities across the country. Localities as diverse as Albuquerque, New Mexico; Portland, Oregon; Phoenix, Arizona; Detroit, Michigan; and Arlington, Virginia, have felt the growing presence of street gangs. The FBI recently reported that the Crips and Bloods, the two most prominent Los Angeles street gangs, have now spread to more than 100 cities and count more than 40,000 members in their ranks. Similarly, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has confirmed the presence of Los Angeles street gangs in at least 49 additional cities.

In fact, most federal, state, and local officials believe that the recent resurgence in street gangs is directly tied to illegal drug trafficking. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the competition for the lucrative drug trade "has led to increased recruitment of juveniles ... and the spread of gangs into suburban areas and small and mid-size cities across the country."

As the gangs have multiplied and spread across the country, their demographics have changed also. Kids are now being recruited into gangs at increasingly younger ages. In 1984, the average age of a gang member in Chicago was 15. By 1987, the average age had dropped to 13. Younger juveniles are being recruited and used to sell illegal drugs because, as previously noted, the juvenile justice system has few sanctions available to address the problem.

Other demographic changes are evident in gang membership. Weapon use is becoming more widespread and more sophisticated. Traditionally, gangs in the United States have been of black or Hispanic descent, but the greatest growth today is occurring in Asian gangs.

Though the membership is changing, the causes remain the same. Gangs are not a middle class phenomenon. Generally, they are found in low income neighborhoods amidst poverty and high unemployment. They most often take hold in a minority population that is undereducated, unskilled, and lacks the traditional family and community values found in middle class neighborhoods.

### **Traditional Approach**

Because, until recently, gangs have been a big city problem they have most often been addressed by large law enforcement agencies. In Los Angeles, for example, the LAPD formed a special gang unit to handle the problem and the District Attorney's office created a hard-core division of 33 attorneys to prosecute only gang-related crimes. That approach, however, is unrealistic for mid-size and smaller cities which have much smaller law enforcement agencies and fewer available resources.

Of the estimated 20,000 law enforcement agencies in this country, 91 percent have less than 50 sworn officers and 24 percent have less than 10 sworn officers. Consequently, smaller departments do not have the resources available to control the gang problem in the traditional manner used by large agencies. Hence, an effective alternative must be available for those jurisdictions facing a gang situation.

### **Is There a Gang Problem?**

The first critical step for a jurisdiction is to determine whether or not it has a gang problem. Size alone is not the determining factor. Neither is geographic location. Many cities have youth gangs, but they are a far cry from hard-core street gangs. Consequently, the response to the problem must be entirely different. There are, however, indicators communities can use to identify possible gang activity. Certain types of graffiti, for

example, point to organized street gangs. Similarly, an increase in weapons found on school property may indicate a gang presence.

It may be difficult, at the outset, to determine whether a gang problem actually exists. Yet, whether the threat is real or imagined, the emotional, political, and fiscal impacts are substantial — and costly. Also, community reaction may exacerbate the problem and can lead to hastily developed solutions without full analysis of the situation. The reactive action is all too often based on information that has not been properly gathered or has been poorly analyzed, managed, and disseminated.

On the other hand, criminal gang activity can be a critical problem for a locality. Such activity can paralyze a neighborhood or community. Long-term effects are substantial. Young children are drawn into the activity. Property values drop, economic development is negatively affected, and community resources are depleted as jurisdictions fight the effects of gang activity.

### **SHOCAP Gang Component Overview**

In response to the growing need for an orderly, comprehensive approach to the gang influence in small and mid-size cities, the OJJDP developed a Gang Offender Comprehensive Action Plan (GO-CAP) based on the successful Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program (SHOCAP).

In 1984 the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) embarked on an ambitious effort to assist jurisdictions in responding to the problem of serious juvenile crime. Out of this effort, the Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program (SHOCAP) was developed. It is based on the premise and principles of the Integrated Criminal Apprehension Program (ICAP), which uses a crime analysis unit as the critical, central support for information gathering, analysis, and dissemination within a department.

The SHOCAP program can increase the quality and relevance of information provided to authorities in the juvenile and criminal justice systems to enable them to make more informed decisions on how best to deal with this very small percentage of serious offenders. SHOCAP is a comprehensive and cooperative information and case management process for police, prosecutors, schools, probation, corrections, and social and community after-care services. The program enables the juvenile and criminal justice systems to focus additional attention on juveniles who repeatedly commit serious crimes, with particular attention given to providing relevant and complete case information to result in more informed sentencing dispositions.

The SHOCAP program has underscored the fact that, although the rate of juvenile crime does not appear to be increasing, the level of violence associated with habitual juvenile offenders has escalated. Some of that increase may be due to the spread of gang activity.

### **Crime Analysis**

Traditional police gang and intelligence units have shared little information with other officers in the department. Consequently, uniformed patrol officers, who have the most direct contact with gang members, do not have access to the gang unit's information. Additionally, because information is usually kept within the drug unit, there is little opportunity for enhanced crime analysis of gang activity. This lack of coordinated, strategic information analysis and sharing significantly hinders a department's ability to deal effectively with gang activity.

Conversely, when a crime analysis unit provides the central support for the suppression and control of gang activity, the collective knowledge and strength of patrol can be used to the fullest extent possible.

For this reason, the GO-CAP program is based on the SHOCAP model which uses crime analysis as a base of support.

Ideally, in small and mid-size agencies, the analyst who focuses on gang activity will be an experienced crime analyst tasked with building and managing case file data that establish trends, patterns, and profiles of criminally active gang members and their associates.

Most important, however, is the recognition that crime analysis is a support function. The primary repository of gang information and, similarly, the primary user of gang analysis information are the uniformed patrol force.

In any department, no matter what the size, uniformed patrol represents the "eyes and ears" of the department. These officers are out in the community. They know their beats. They are familiar with not only the criminal activity taking place on their shifts but, more importantly, they often know who is responsible for the activity.

Because they are out on the street, it is uniformed patrol officers who can use gang intelligence information most effectively to control and suppress criminal activity.

## Implementation of GO-CAP

In order to implement a GO-CAP component program, a department must be willing to commit several resources including creating a gang steering committee, designating a gang analyst, and obtaining the full involvement of beat officers. The major duties and responsibilities of each are described below.

### Gang Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is grounded in operations, thus providing direct communication links with the rest of the department. Ideally, the committee is chaired by a sergeant and includes the gang analyst, representatives from patrol, a school liaison officer, and an investigator, all of whom sit on the committee while continuing their regular duties. Each should be chosen based on his or her interest in the gang problem.

Within the department, the major objective of the Steering Committee is to encourage every parole officer to become actively involved in gang suppression, control, and supervision. Similarly, every patrol officer is encouraged to provide to the committee any and all gang identification and activity.

The Steering Committee's goals are:

- To establish criteria for classifying gang members, gangs, and gang-related incidents.
- To select a management information system to store intelligence information on gangs and create a system for disseminating the information to all officers in a useable form.
- To create a comprehensive database to aid in the investigation of gang-related crimes and to guide the selective enforcement process.
- To determine the needs of the patrol officer in dealing with gangs and assure access to all officers of gang database information.
- To foster interagency cooperation similar to the SHOCAP process involving at least the probation department, the district attorney, and the schools. The purpose will be to secure the most informed sentences for hard core gang members. The Steering Committee will also encourage that strict probation terms prohibiting gang association be sought and those terms be made known to uniformed patrol for enforcement purposes.

- To encourage all department members to obtain and submit gang information to be included in the database.
- To have the gang analyst provide roll call briefings to train officers in the system once it has been established and to provide training in gang recognition and suppression.
- To encourage the gang analyst to provide feedback to patrol regarding case dispositions. Every effort should be made to keep patrol informed of the department's gang efforts, the progress made, and the benefit and value of the information furnished to the gang analyst by the patrol division.

These goals may later be modified if field testing warrants such changes. In order for the committee to work most effectively, it is recommended that the group meet at least once a month.

At the same time the criteria are being formulated, an information subcommittee should begin identifying the fields to be used to capture the needed data in an information system.

Also, simultaneous to the criteria identification process, the department may choose to survey other area departments, task forces, and organizations in order to determine methods already being used and to coordinate efforts.

At this time, it is also the responsibility of the Steering Committee to meet with representatives of other juvenile-related agencies and organizations in order to keep them apprised of the program's progress and solicit their input during this critical formulation stage.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the Steering Committee guides the direction and implementation of the entire GO-CAP program within the department. If Steering Committee members are carefully chosen and are committed to the process, then GO-CAP has a much greater chance of acceptance and success. The goal, of course, is institutionalization of the program throughout the department, consequently, it is critically important to identify all necessary members of the committee as soon as possible. Once they become actively involved, they become the "product champions" for GO-CAP and will be most effective in communicating its purpose.

## **Gang Analyst**

The GO-CAP program uses the Integrated Criminal Apprehension Program (ICAP) service delivery model of data collection, analysis, planning, service delivery, and feedback (Figure 2).

Thus, a Gang Analyst is the lynch pin of the process. The primary function of the Gang Analyst is to provide for the careful, diligent collection and analysis of information in order to recognize patterns and linkages of gang activity. The Gang Analyst is responsible for the strategies and tactical plans which law enforcement will use. Thus, the analyst serves as the central clearinghouse for all gang intelligence information gathered or received by any law enforcement or juvenile-related personnel. Using that information, the analyst builds the strongest possible file on each gang member involved in serious criminal activity.

Further, the Gang Analyst will provide the information base which serves as the foundation of the case management process so important in the enlistment of multi-agency resources and support functions for the GO-CAP program.

It is the responsibility of the Analyst to determine the extent of gang associations and the threat to public safety posed by these groups. Gang information analysis will assist the law enforcement agency in interdiction, suppression, and control of juvenile confederations, associations, or gangs.

## **Intra-Agency Support**

This means that all relevant intelligence information centers within the department must be shared for effective gang management

Specific job duties for the Gang Analyst include:

- Collating and reviewing offense reports.
- Developing relevant intelligence sources on gang activity.
- Providing information-based technical assistance for tactical multi-agency responses to juvenile gang activity.
- Monitoring files on serious habitual juvenile offenders and their involvement or recruitment into gang activities.

- Maintaining monitoring files on gang members, gang recruitment procedures, out-of-jurisdiction contacts, affiliations, communication methods, detention placement and release information, and community contacts.
- Compiling statistical data to track gang activity in the community.

### **Data Sources**

In building case files, the analyst collects information from a variety of sources, not solely from traditional law enforcement documents. Additional information may be found in school records, other juvenile justice agency records, social services, and community sources. The data gathered may be used in preparation and development of schedules for crime prevention target hardening, serious habitual offender interdiction, and apprehension operations.

Additionally, as the program progresses, other non-traditional sources of information may also be identified by the analyst. Each should be evaluated according to the goals of the program.

### **GO-CAP Software Support**

Appropriate software support is critical to the GO-CAP program. In Oxnard, California, GO/TRAK software has been designed to support the GO-CAP program. GO/TRAK is a street gang intelligence system which incorporates all the elements of the SHOCAP information system, then adds the ability to track street gangs and gang members, gang-related incidents, graffiti, gang handsigns, tattoos, and other information which is specific to street gangs.

The GO/TRAK software serves two primary purposes. First, the information compiled about gang members can be presented to prosecutors in the form of a dossier and used to help secure appropriate sentences for repeat offenders. Second, GOTRAK's flexibility and power in retrieving information makes it an ideal intelligence and investigative tool.

Using GO/TRAK, photographs of gang members, tattoos, other marks and scars, and graffiti and handsigns can be associated with gangs and gang members and included in case management dossiers. Thus, the dossiers print everything that is known about selected gangs as well as individual members and their associates.

An unlimited number of offender classifications can be created, making it possible to track any type of offender group. The system can track any key offender category. Hence, a

jurisdiction can define the offender types which apply to that community.

The GO/TRAK system is also designed to produce a photo lineup that can be displayed on the screen or printed on hard copy.

### **Analysis Products**

In addition to dossiers and photo lineups, other GO-CAP analysis products are generated. In the dissemination of information, the analyst may use crime watch alerts, target vulnerability profiles, suspect profiles, special information bulletins, case file summaries, and subject dossiers.

Regular roll call briefings provide the Analyst an opportunity to impart special tactical information and to receive additional information on specific gang members.

Equally important, the Gang Analyst can provide feedback regarding case dispositions, the current status of particular cases or gangs, plus other information needed by patrol.

### **Patrol**

There can be no GO-CAP program without the active support of beat officers. As described above, the products provided by the Gang Analyst can best be used by uniformed patrol. For example, increased gang activity which is tracked and analyzed by the Gang Analyst can then be addressed by reallocating manpower to meet the increased activity in a hot spot. Similarly, analysis of gang movement may define future beat allocations. Such response is a major component of community-oriented policing. Also, because gangs tend to move within fairly well-defined territories, GO-CAP analysis provides some of the best opportunities for preventive patrol tactics and deterrent patrol scheduling.

Feedback from special patrol operations which are guided by gang analysis provide additional data for further analysis, thus completing the ICAP model of effective police service delivery.

### **Benefits of SHOCAP Gang Component**

Over twenty-five years ago, government agencies began adopting the business model of workload efficiency. This philosophy was based on the premise that work could be completed most efficiently when each individual was assigned a specific task to complete.

The result of this efficiency model, according to Peter M. Senge, is that when we attempt to reduce complex situations into

smaller parts, we "no longer see the consequences of our actions; we lose our intrinsic sense of connection to a larger whole." In other words, effectiveness was lost in the rush to be efficient. The emphasis on individual duties and tasks also negatively impacted on cooperation and integration of effort. Workers became isolated from other workers, and functions became isolated from one another.

In law enforcement agencies, this division of labor meant that detectives no longer communicated with patrol. Juvenile units were no longer considered useful to the regular detective division. Crime prevention and crime analysis were isolated, not only from one another, but also from other groups within the department

On a larger scale, justice agencies became more isolated from one another. Prosecutors no longer knew what the police were doing. Corrections failed to communicate with the police. Probation and parole functions became isolated from other justice agencies' activities.

Other government agencies experienced similar problems. Social services, schools, and the courts all act independent of one another, even though they share the same common goals.

The ultimate result was that those individuals whom these agencies served became victims of the rush toward efficiency. Lack of coordination, incompatible policies, and lack of communication, created gaps or tears in the support net.

### **The New Systems Approach**

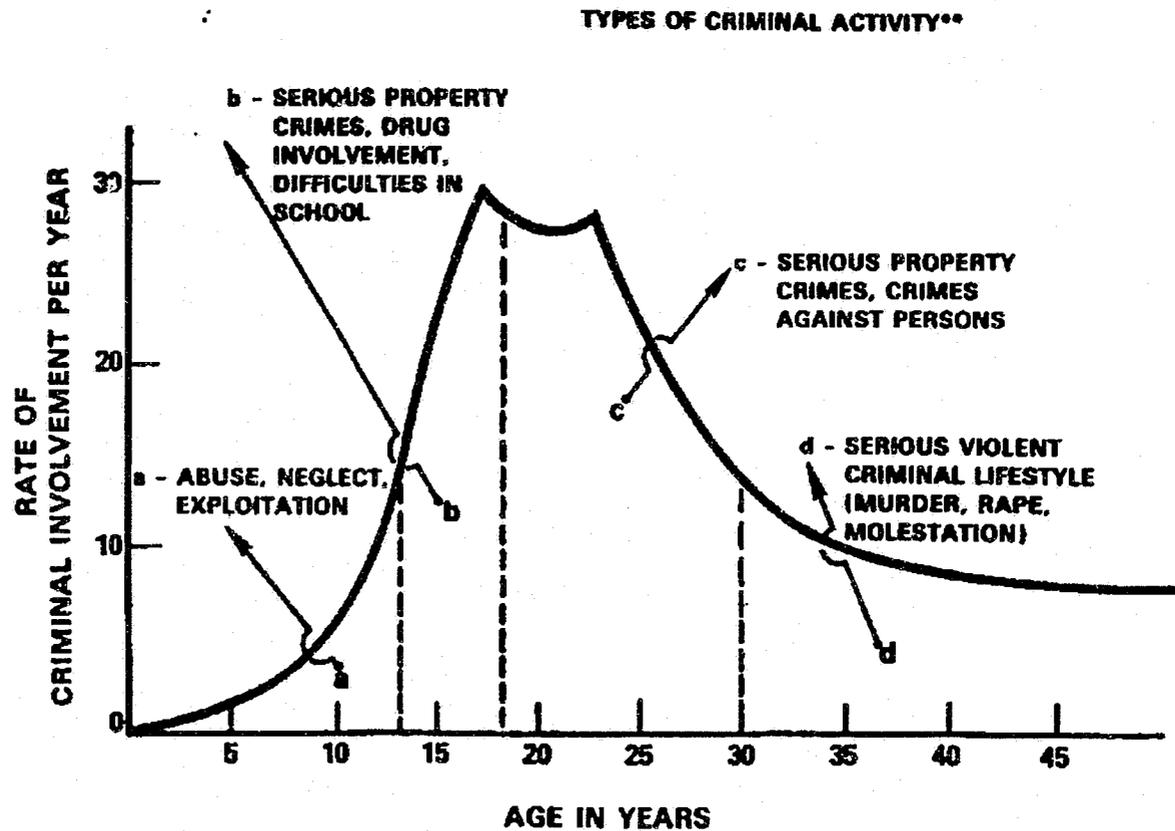
The major strength of the SHOCAP approach is that it encourages a system-wide response to the problem of serious juvenile crime. It requires juvenile-related agencies to develop policies, practices, and procedures for sharing information. SHOCAP implements a comprehensive case management system based on an individualized plan which uses interagency and community data to direct the correctional, educational, and reentry programs for serious, habitual offenders. It also builds case management support for more informed decision-making in juvenile probation, prosecution, judicial dispositions, correction alternatives, and parole.

Perhaps more than any other juveniles, gang members' behavior patterns are guided by the activities of other juveniles and/or adults. A juvenile gang member socializes with other gang members. He attends school with them (or is truant with them). He lives in their neighborhood, and he commits crimes with them. The SHOCAP base provides the ability to analyze these linkages which can then be used for both crime-specific information and for long-term associate information.

The GO-CAP approach uses these linkages and the SHOCAP management process to address effectively the problem of juvenile gangs in small and mid-size cities.

# CONCEPTUAL MODEL: SERIOUS HABITUAL CRIMINAL EVOLUTION\*

Figure 1. Conceptual Model: Serious Habitual Criminal Evolution



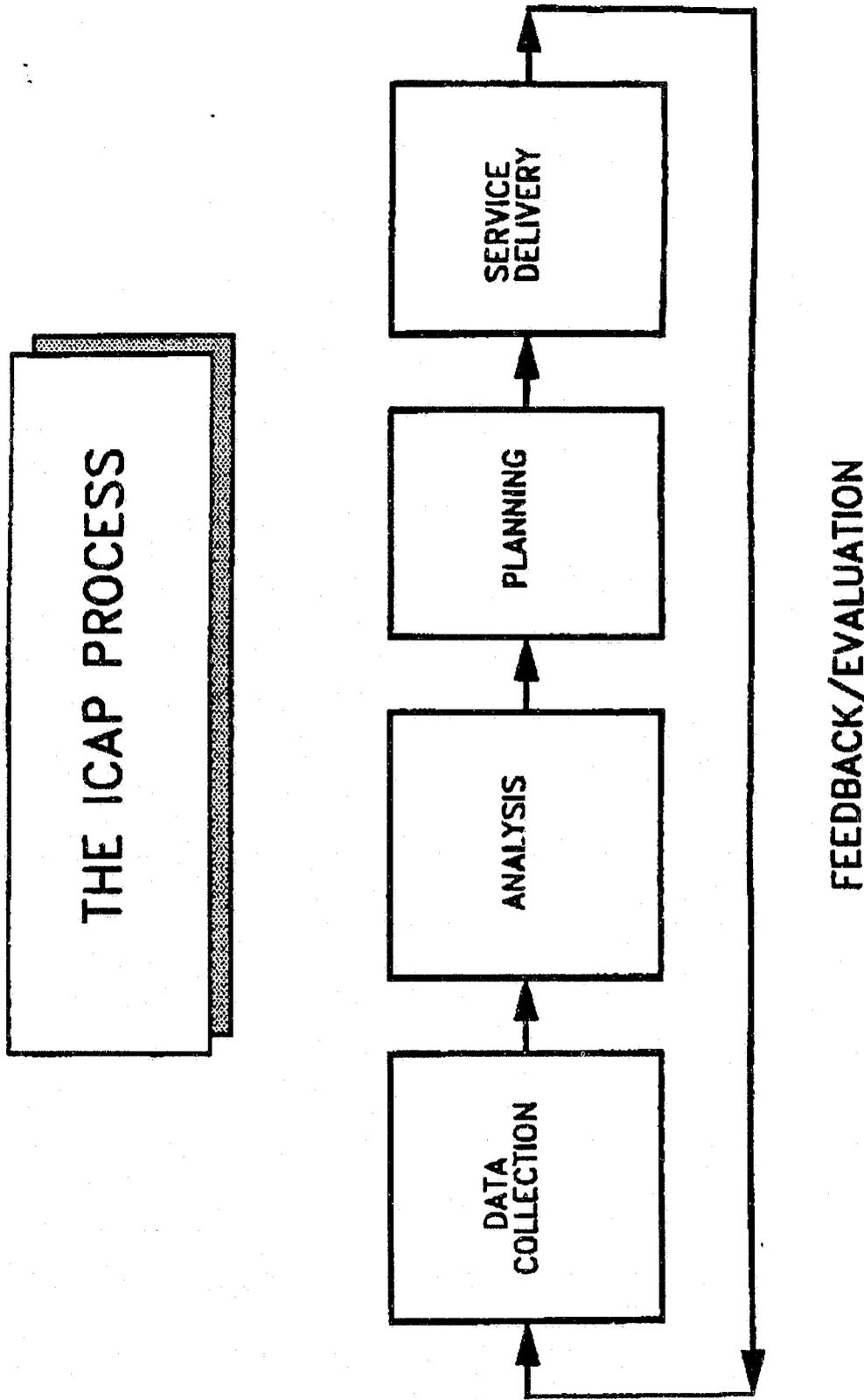


Figure 2. Integrated Criminal Apprehension Program (ICAP)