

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

INTERNAL ROUTING/ACTION SLIP

TO	BLDG.	ROOM	NAME/TITLE/ORGANIZATION
			NCJRS
			ACQUISITION
			LIBRARY
			ATTENTION:
			GUY BOSTON
			OLD POLICE REPORT
			POLICE
			TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NCJRS
			REPORTS
			ALTOONA (PA) - POLICE DEPARTMENT - NOV 1 11 1078
			RECORDS STUDY FOR AC
			DEPLOYMENT OF SEAT TEAMS

- ☐ RECOMMENDATION/COMMENT    ☐ LOG    ☐ NECESSARY ACTION  
☐ SEE REMARKS ON REVERSE    ☐ FILE    ☐ COORDINATE  
☐ MAKE COPIES (NO. )    ☐ SEE ME    ☐ PER INQUIRY  
☐ RETURN (BY )    ☐ CALL ME    ☐ INFORMATION

FROM: B. H. H. H.    BLDG.    ROOM 1159  
 PHONE 6-3944    DATE

DOJ FORM DOJ-359 8-1-74

37471

INDIVIDUAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

*In Response to a Request for Technical Assistance*

*by the*

Altoona, Pennsylvania, Police Department

January 31, 1973

*Prepared by:*

Public Administration Service  
1313 East 60th Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60637

(Per Contract J-LEAA-015-72)

I. PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

A. **Consultant Assigned:**

George T. Felkenes  
Coordinator, Criminal Justice Program  
University of Alabama in Birmingham  
Birmingham, Alabama

B. **Date Assignment Received:**

January 3, 1973

C. **Date of Contact with LEAA Regional Coordinator:**

January 4, 1973

D. **Dates of On-Site Consultation:**

January 13-15, 1973

E. **Individuals Contacted:**

William T. Stevens  
Chief of Police  
Altoona, Pennsylvania, Police Department

Jack Kuhn  
Deputy Chief  
Altoona, Pennsylvania, Police Department

Lieutenant Rudy Vorndrn  
Chief, Administrative Services  
Altoona, Pennsylvania, Police Department

Mrs. Theresa Bartell  
Governor's Justice Commission

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

### A. Problem as per Request for Technical Assistance:

Assistance in the development of a revised departmental records system.

### B. Problem Actually Observed:

The Altoona Police Department (APD) is in the process of developing a new records system. Ultimately the system will be part of a system including Altoona and Logan Township which completely encircles Altoona. The purpose of the site visit was to offer advice on techniques and information necessary to deploy Special Crime Action Teams (SCAT) in Altoona. Altoona has been designated a high crime impact city by the Central Region of the Pennsylvania Governor's Justice Commission. The consultant was to limit technical assistance to the types of matters necessary to plan, develop, and deploy Special Crime Action Teams.

### III. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

The City of Altoona has been designated a "high crime impact city" by the Central Region of the Pennsylvania Governor's Justice Commission. The Governor's Justice Commission desires to develop a strong records-keeping/communications system in Altoona. Recently the Altoona Police Department created a Staff Services Division which provides general administrative and staff support to the Department. One of the major functions of the Division is maintaining the departmental records.

A management survey conducted in November, 1972, by the Municipal Consulting Services Division, Bureau of Local Government Services, Department of Community Affairs, discusses in some detail the strengths and weaknesses of the current records system. Numerous suggestions are also contained in that consultant's survey. Many of the suggested improvements have a direct effect on the rapid retrieval and analysis of information necessary to implement the SCAT concept effectively, and therefore should be adopted as soon as possible.

#### IV. DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION

The reports which the Department maintains appear to be adequate; however, retrieval and storage leave much to be desired. Hand tabulation of statistical reports to pinpoint specialized SCATs is too slow. Information on the offense reports used by the Altoona Police Department should be capable of being extracted continually. Statistical reports need to be developed on a short, periodic basis to assist departmental management in identifying trends in criminal activity: (1) crime location; (2) times; (3) types; and (4) if theft or burglary, kinds of property taken, etc. Rapid retrieval is essential for this purpose.

For purposes of implementing the SCAT concept, the Altoona Police Department should give consideration to reducing the size of patrol and reporting areas since both are the same in Altoona. The patrol zones are too large to effectively concentrate resources in a specific area for crime prevention, implement identified programs, identify hazards, determine changes in needs, and have information for necessary enforcement activity. By reducing the reporting area size, the agency will be better able to determine potential high incidence areas which can then be subjected to scrutiny by SCATs. Patrol areas should be flexible in order to concentrate the maximum effort in the trouble areas along with the special crime action teams.

In surveying the records support to implement the SCAT concept, the consultant concluded that the designation as a "high crime impact city" should provide the necessary vehicle to secure funding in order to make the necessary internal changes. To be prepared when the SCAT concept is implemented, the Altoona Police Department should implement a training effort to secure a minimum of two highly trained people in each of the following areas:

Robbery.

Burglary.

Thefts (residential and commercial).

Others identified by the Department.

Each SCAT will then be supervised by one of these persons. In addition, each specially trained person can then train the other team members. Training courses are available throughout the county at colleges, academies, and the like.

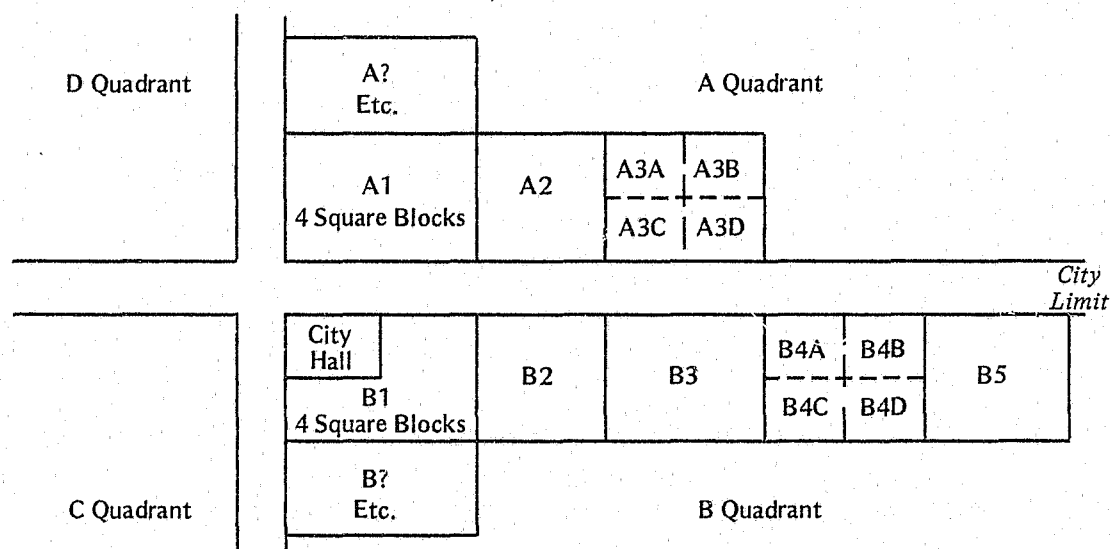
A well-organized and properly managed records system must meet three characteristics if the police agency is to perform its mission: (1) completeness with a minimum number of different forms, (2) accessible information which is easily available for planning on a 24-hour basis, and (3) uniformity as far as possible. The records required for implementation of SCAT are primarily concerned with item 2, but all three are important.

## V. RECOMMENDED COURSES OF ACTION

- A. A grid breakdown of the city into a manageable size is necessary to record and identify areas into which SCATs will be interjected. The system would be an arbitrary breakdown of the city into four, six, or nine block grids (Figure 1) with an identifying code given to each grid. The grids would radiate out from a selected point in the center of the city—in Altoona the City Hall would be the likely starting point. The grids would not follow patrol areas but would be used to identify high crime areas where the resources of the Department could be concentrated. Additionally the total resources of the community could be brought to bear on crimes committed in any one of the grids.

Figure 1

### GRID SYSTEM ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA

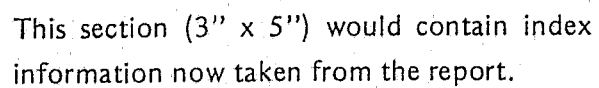




- B. Patrol zones must be made flexible in contrast to the arbitrary ones now in existence. It is even conceivable that the patrol commander could change the patrol areas on a 24-hour basis when he receives information from several grid zones that "X" kinds and numbers of offenses occurred during the preceding 24—36 hours. For the SCAT concept to work properly, the necessity for timely information is paramount in proper management of the departmental resources. By identifying the high crime areas, SCAT and patrol activity can be brought to bear on short notice. For example, the patrol zone for one week for car number 1 might be the entire A quadrant, or it might be grid zone A2 or A1, 2, and 3. The needs, in other words, dictate that resources be assigned to flexible areas or beats.
- C. The information currently found on the various records in the Department should be coded and put on IBM cards to allow immediate retrieval of comprehensive criminal activity and general police reports. Crime trends on as short as a 24-hour basis can be plotted in order to initiate SCAT support. Also, and aside from the SCAT consideration, Altoona Police Department records should be consolidated into a central location with a modern file system such as the Diebold rotary file. Space in the Department is at a premium with great amounts of floor area used by the various files. Also, there are numerous files of ancient vintage which conceivably could be microfilmed to save space. Purging of all files is also a requisite according to the contacts made by the consultant in the Altoona Police Department.
- The use of IBM cards will require that the Police Department obtain automated data processing equipment and design contingent systems, forms, etc. The specific information to be coded, and therefore the design of the coding (IBM) card, should be developed by the same individuals who design the data processing system.
- D. Consideration should be given to hiring a systems analyst for a short term to concentrate solely on the records system in general and to redesign some of the departmental forms to allow them to be used for multiple purposes. By redesigning the Altoona Police Department "Offense Report" form and adding another color copy, the added copy could be used as the card in the Master Name Index. For example, the form design (Figure 2) would permit the information necessary for index purposes to be placed in a small section (upper left corner) of the report, and the added copy would be perforated, permitting the information on it to be torn off and placed in the Master Name Index as the index card.

Figure 2

## REPORT AND INDEX CARD FORMAT



This section (3" x 5") would contain index information now taken from the report.

The added color copy would have nothing below the line. On the other copies, the remainder of the report would be in this section.

According to the Altoona Police Department interviews, eliminating the typing of this one card would save many man-hours per week.

The limited period of available time did not permit the consultant to design the new forms and processes.

- E. A training program within the Department and a public education effort for the City should be commenced to inform as many as possible of the new system, its workings, and its benefits. When drawn up, the departmental program would be in much more detail and adequate to explain the system and what the personnel are to do to make it work.
- F. Altoona should seek further assistance in promptly implementing the above recommendations and those made in the management survey by the Municipal Consulting Services Division.

END

7 miles/min