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# Community Prosecution Strategies

# MONOGRAPH

August 2003

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**NCJ 195062**

This document was prepared by the Crime and Justice Research Institute (under the working title *Community Prosecution Strategies: Measuring Impact*), under grant number 1999-DD-BX-K008, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

# **Community Prosecution Strategies**

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August 2003



# Acknowledgments

## Arizona

*Phoenix City Attorney's Office:* We are grateful to Hon. Kerry Wangberg for his staff's help in preparing our report. We also wish to thank division head Arron Carreon-Ainsa for taking the time to describe the program in depth.

*Pima County Attorney's Office:* We are thankful to Hon. Barbara LaWall, Pima County Attorney, for allowing us to speak with her staff. We greatly appreciate the assistance of Deputy County Attorney Christine Curtis, who responded enthusiastically to our requests for information.

## California

*Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office:* Our thanks to Hon. Gil Garcetti, former Los Angeles County District Attorney, for the cooperation provided by his office. We are grateful to Assistant District Attorney Nancy Lidamore for taking the time to answer our questions and provide information.

*Oakland City Attorney's Office:* We greatly appreciate the kind invitation to visit the office of City Attorney John Russo. We are very grateful to Paralegal Sandra Marion for providing us with insight into the process of starting up a community prosecution program and taking us on a tour of the pilot site in Oakland. We also thank Deputy City Attorney Charles Vose for his informative presentation at the Community Prosecution Conference—2000, for taking the time to respond to our followup questions, and for facilitating our observation of the pilot site.

*Placer County District Attorney's Office:* We thank Hon. Bradford R. Fenocchio, Placer County District Attorney, for the cooperation provided by his office. We wish to thank Assistant District Attorney Suzanne Gazzaniga for her cooperation in spending valuable time answering questions about the unique elder-abuse target of their program, and sending written program information promptly.

*Sacramento County District Attorney's Office:* We wish to thank the office of Hon. Jan Scully, where Assistant District Attorney Karen Maxwell generously shared her time and expertise on their community prosecution program.

*Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office:* Our thanks to Hon. George Kennedy, Santa Clara County District Attorney, for the gracious attention of his office. Our observation of the Santa Clara Community Prosecution site was eye opening. Deputy District Attorney Chris Arriolla was generous with his time and provided an invaluable glimpse of

community prosecution at work. We are grateful to Assistant District Attorney Marc Buller for his kind invitation to observe, and the answers and information provided.

*San Diego District Attorney's Office:* We appreciate the cooperation received from the staff of San Diego District Attorney Casey Gwinn. We are grateful to Assistant District Attorney Joan Dawson, head of the community prosecution program, who provided valuable indepth information.

## **Colorado**

*Denver District Attorney's Office:* Our thanks to Hon. William Ritter, Denver District Attorney, for the cooperation of his staff. We appreciate the assistance of Susan Motika, Director of the Community Justice Unit, for providing written information and taking the time to discuss the program. She and her staff did an admirable job of hosting APRI's Community Prosecution Workshop in April 2000, giving us an opportunity to see Denver's community justice program in action. Our thanks to Community Justice Advocate Erin Sullivan Lange and Community Justice Coordinator David Mrakitsch for answering our questions. We also thank Christine Talley, co-chair of the Capitol Hill Community Justice Council, for welcoming us to observe the council in action and answering our questions.

## **District of Columbia**

*U.S. Attorney's Office:* We are grateful to Hon. Wilma A. Lewis, U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, for the assistance we received from her staff. We thank Assistant U.S. Attorney Clifford Keenan for providing written materials and valuable information on the U.S. Attorney's Office community prosecution program in Washington, D.C.

## **Florida**

*Brevard/Seminole County State Attorney's Office:* We are grateful to Hon. Norman Wolfinger and to division head Phil Archer for the indepth interview and materials they so generously provided in response to our many questions.

*Palm Beach County State Attorney's Office:* Our thanks to Hon. Barry Krischer, Palm Beach County State Attorney, for the cooperation of his staff. Assistant State Attorney James Martz volunteered considerable time answering our questions and explaining the process and policies of COMBAT. Our thanks also to Assistant State Attorney Terrance Nolan for the informative discussion.

## **Hawaii**

*Prosecuting Attorney for the City and County of Honolulu:* We wish to thank Hon. Peter Carlisle, Prosecuting Attorney for the City and County of Honolulu. Our first contact with a community prosecution site was with staff member Claire Merry, whose enthusiasm about the project and responsiveness to followup calls were very helpful.

**Illinois**

*Cook County State's Attorney:* We are grateful to Hon. Richard Devine, Cook County State's Attorney, for the courtesy of his staff. Conversations with Assistant State's Attorney Neera Walsh provided information about community prosecution in Chicago today, and insight and contacts for background research on the original project from the 1970s. We are indebted also to former Cook County assistant state's attorneys, Hon. Nancy S. Salyers and Ray Grossman, Esquire, for describing what we believe to be the first community prosecution effort in the United States.

**Indiana**

*Marion County Prosecutor's Office:* We are grateful to Hon. Scott Newman, Marion County Prosecutor, for the assistance provided by his staff. We especially appreciate the time and information provided by Program Supervisor Diane Burleson and former Supervisor Melinda Haag.

*St. Joseph's County Prosecutor's Office:* We thank Hon. Christopher A. Toth, St. Joseph's County Prosecuting Attorney, for the cooperation we received from his office. Khadijah Muhammad, co-director of Strategic Prosecution, took the time to explain the startup process of their project, and in a later conversation, its implementation.

**Maryland**

*Howard County State's Attorney's Office:* We thank Hon. Marna McLendon, Howard County State's Attorney, for the time she took to discuss community prosecution generally and her project specifically. Her insights were invaluable.

*Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office:* We are grateful for the assistance and cooperation of the staff of Hon. Douglas Gansler, Montgomery County State's Attorney. We also appreciate the assistance and cooperation of Assistant State's Attorney Tom Eldridge.

**Massachusetts**

*Plymouth County District Attorney's Office:* We appreciate the cooperation of the staff of Hon. Michael Sullivan, Plymouth County District Attorney, and particularly Assistant District Attorney William Ascì, who responded so promptly to our calls.

*Middlesex County District Attorney's Office:* We extend our thanks to Hon. Martha Coakley, Middlesex County District Attorney. We also appreciate the help provided by Assistant District Attorney Kerry Ahearn, who explained the structure and functioning of the distinctive program operating in her county.

*Suffolk County District Attorney's Office:* We thank Hon. Ralph Martin, Suffolk County District Attorney, for the courtesy extended by his office. The dedication of Deborah McDonnah, head of Community Affairs for the community prosecution project in Suffolk County, was evident in our discussion.

### **Michigan**

*Kalamazoo County Prosecuting Attorney's Office:* We are grateful for the assistance provided by the office of Hon. James Gregart, Kalamazoo County Prosecuting Attorney. Senior Neighborhood Prosecutor Karen Hayter was extremely helpful and informative, both in phone conversations and in person.

### **Minnesota**

*Hennepin County Attorney's Office:* We appreciate the cooperation of the staff of Hon. Amy Klobuchar, Hennepin County Attorney. The time spent with us by Martha Holton-Dimick, Ericka Mozangue, and Terri Froehlke, assistant county attorneys, provided great insight into the life of a community prosecutor, and the types of issues that arise in the field.

### **Missouri**

*Jackson County Prosecutor's Office:* We appreciate the cooperation of the office of Hon. Robert Beard, Jackson County Prosecutor. Chief Trial Assistant Kathy Finnell's knowledge about community justice and her commitment to the community were evident in our conversations, and we appreciate her input.

### **New York**

*Bronx District Attorney's Office:* We thank Hon. Robert T. Johnson, Bronx District Attorney, and Susan Sadd, Director of Planning and Analysis, who provided us with valuable information.

*Erie County District Attorney's Office:* We are grateful to the staff of Hon. Frank J. Clark for taking the time to describe community prosecution as it is practiced in their office. Thanks to Assistant District Attorney Michael Drmacich for patiently answering our many questions.

*Kings County District Attorney's Office:* We are grateful to Hon. Charles J. Hynes, Kings County District Attorney, for the information given by his staff. We thank Lee Hudson, Director of the Community Relations Bureau, and Deputy District Attorney Michael Vechionne, for providing information about Kings County's program.

*Manhattan, New York County District Attorney's Office:* Our thanks go to Hon. Robert Morgenthau, New York County District Attorney, for the cooperation we received from

his office. We would like to thank Executive District Attorney Kristine Hamann and Community Affairs Department Head Connie Cuchiarra for information about Manhattan's project.

*Nassau County District Attorney's Office:* We are grateful to Hon. Denis Dillon, Nassau County District Attorney, for the assistance provided by his office. We appreciate the input of Assistant District Attorney Rene Fiechter, who spent a great deal of time answering our questions, on more than one occasion.

*Westchester County District Attorney's Office:* Our thanks go to Hon. Jeanine Pirro, Westchester County District Attorney, for the courtesy of her staff. We extend our appreciation to Community Justice Coordinator Yolanda Robinson and Assistant District Attorney Robert Maccarone, with whom we engaged in several discussions about community prosecution generally and their program specifically.

## **Ohio**

*Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office:* We appreciate the cooperation of the staff of Hon. William Mason. Assistant Prosecutor Richard Neff generously shared his time to answer all our questions.

## **Oregon**

*Multnomah County District Attorney's Office:* We are indebted to Hon. Michael Schrunk, Multnomah County District Attorney, for the cooperation provided by his office, and to Deputy District Attorney Jim Hayden for answering our many questions about the pioneering program in Portland. Our thanks also go to Staff Assistant Judy Phelan for her help.

## **Pennsylvania**

*Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office:* Our thanks go to Hon. Andrew Jarbola III and to Christine Tocki for taking the time to describe community prosecution as it operates in their office.

*Philadelphia District Attorney's Office:* We wish to thank Hon. Lynne Abraham, Philadelphia District Attorney. We are grateful to George G. Mosee, Jr., Deputy District Attorney and Chief of the Narcotics Division, for inviting us into his office to learn about community prosecution in Philadelphia.

## **Tennessee**

*Knox County District Attorney General's Office:* Our thanks go to Hon. Randy Nichols, whose staff generously took the time to describe community prosecution in their county.

We appreciate Program Coordinator Rhonda Garren taking the time to share her expertise with us.

### **Texas**

*Travis County District Attorney's Office:* We appreciate the cooperation of the office of Hon. Ronnie Earle, Travis County District Attorney. Assistant District Attorney Meg Brooks provided us with valuable information about community prosecution in Austin.

### **Washington**

*Seattle City Attorney:* We are grateful to the office of Hon. Mark Sidran for taking the time to speak with us and to Criminal Division Chief Robert Hood for his kind cooperation.

We are extremely grateful to Barbara Boland and Catherine Coles, pioneers in community prosecution research, for generously sharing their knowledge, insights, and extensive research into community justice. We also wish to thank Cynthia Tompkins, then-project manager and senior attorney at the American Prosecutors Research Institute, for welcoming us to the first APRI-sponsored Community Prosecution Workshop and APRI Community Prosecution Program Director Michael Kuykendall for his interest in our efforts.

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Community prosecution strategies signal a major milestone in changing the culture and role of the prosecutor by developing partnerships and collaborative, problem-solving approaches with the community to improve the quality of life and safety of citizens. The most innovative community prosecution initiatives pose fundamental questions about the function of the prosecutor, the ways in which the prosecutor seeks justice, and the organization and operation of the prosecutor's office. These strategies suggest an important shift in traditional prosecutorial philosophy, as prosecutors emphasize community-focused crime strategies and adapt values and methods of other community justice innovations, particularly those relating to community policing, court, corrections, and restorative justice initiatives.

This monograph describes the emergence of community prosecution strategies. It identifies some of their common elements in a working typology based on features of innovations operating in diverse settings in the United States. This discussion of community prosecution strategies draws on examples from 36 sites across the nation. The monograph concludes by proposing a conceptual framework for evaluating and describing some of the challenges posed by community prosecution strategies for assessing impact and measuring performance.

## Prosecution and the Community

Since the 1960s, the concept of community, variously defined, has continued to surface as an important criminal justice element. For example, community corrections, a concept dating back more than a century, was important in correctional innovation during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s (Harris, 1995). In the late 1960s, the relationship between the community and the police became a primary focus of justice reform strategies (President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, 1967; U.S. National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, 1970). Problem-oriented and community-policing initiatives of the 1980s and 1990s were developed to ensure that community concerns were fully addressed by police agencies (Davis, 1975; Goldstein, 1990; Rosenbaum, 1994).

More recently, the traditional posture of the courts, purposefully aloof from the problems of the community, was challenged with the establishment of the Midtown Community Court in 1993. The Midtown Community Court sought a closer working relationship with the community and served as a catalyst for diverse community-oriented justice initiatives. All of these and other community-oriented crime and justice foci form the background against which current community prosecution strategies have emerged and can be understood.

## **Emergence of Community Prosecution**

Community prosecution has been described as a “grassroots approach to law enforcement involving both traditional and nontraditional prosecutorial initiatives” (Weinstein, 1998: 19). In several jurisdictions, community prosecution initiatives were sparked by the implementation of community policing and were logical, complementary extensions of the focus on community issues to the prosecutor’s function (Hankins and Weinstein, 1996). In locations without community policing programs, community prosecution strategies were developed to respond to community crime and public safety issues that the police were not sufficiently addressing.

In many instances, community prosecution involves deploying prosecutors or nonlegal staff in the community to identify residents’ concerns and invite their participation in developing strategies for addressing problems of crime and social disorder that are their highest priority. Prosecutors involved in these outreach efforts often find that community residents do not share the traditional prosecutor’s concern with the prosecution of serious crimes. Although the community may assume that such matters always will be a priority, their immediate concerns more often focus on the nuisance or quality-of-life crimes that make life in the neighborhood unsafe or unpleasant. In short, prosecutors have discovered—like policing and community court leaders—that problems identified by residents as most important to them in their daily lives are generally not the serious crimes that the criminal justice system appears most ready to handle.

The emergence and diffusion of community prosecution as an innovation is difficult to reconstruct because many prosecutors have been dealing with community issues in various ways for some time. A good historical case can be made that community prosecution preceded rather than followed from community policing reforms, drawing its substance instead from the community organization innovations of the 1960s. The establishment of Cook County State’s Attorney Bernard Carey’s 1973 community prosecution program in Chicago predates the first community policing program and was clearly influenced by the active community organization initiatives in Chicago in the 1960s.

Current estimates vary as to the number of prosecutors’ offices in the United States that have adopted some version of a community prosecution strategy. Certainly, the problems thrust on the criminal justice system by drug crimes and drug enforcement during the 1980s and 1990s forced creation of new strategies to cope with the overwhelming criminal caseload, including ways to free neighborhoods of the problems related to crime. In 1985, for example, Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau instituted a community-focused approach through a Community Affairs Unit in response to the advent of crack cocaine in New York City, sending an experienced nonattorney employee into the community to improve community relations and gather intelligence to better prosecute drug crimes.

The origin of the contemporary community prosecution movement in the United States is most often traced to the pioneering efforts of Multnomah County District Attorney Michael Schrunk. In 1990, he established the Neighborhood District Attorney Unit in Portland, Oregon, in response to the concerns of business leaders that quality-of-life crimes impeded development of a central business district (Boland, 1998a). Other community-oriented prosecution innovations followed in 1991 in Kings County (Brooklyn), New York, under District Attorney Charles J. Hynes and in Montgomery County, Maryland, under then-State's Attorney Andrew Sonner. Both initiatives involved major reorganization of the prosecutors' offices along geographic lines and established new working links with the communities in each area. Also in 1991, the Community-Based Justice Program began operation in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, and in 1993, the Street Level Advocacy Program was instituted in Marion County (Indianapolis), Indiana. After the early 1990s, the innovation was adapted in additional jurisdictions and spread more rapidly. Table 1 lists community prosecution sites and the years they began implementing community prosecution.

## **Typology of Community Prosecution Strategies**

The forms that community prosecution has taken across the United States are evidence that there is no one-size-fits-all community prosecution model. As with other community justice innovations, community prosecution strategies have taken different forms in response to the needs and circumstances of specific localities. They have been tailored to the problems of neighborhoods, commercial districts, or other specific geographic locations within cities and rural areas. Despite their diverse approaches, however, community prosecution strategies share some underlying dimensions.

This monograph proposes seven critical dimensions focusing on common features that appear to define community prosecution strategies and to provide an organizing framework or working typology of community prosecution strategies. They include:

- The target problem bringing about the need for the community prosecution strategy.
- The geographic target area addressed by the initiative.
- The role of the community in the community prosecution strategy.
- The content of the community prosecution approach to the community problems addressed.
- The organizational adaptations made by the prosecutor's office for community prosecution.

**Table 1: Chronology of Community Prosecution Sites**

Manhattan, New York	1985
Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon	1990
Kings County (Brooklyn), New York	1991
Montgomery County, Maryland	1991
Middlesex County, Massachusetts	1991
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	1991
Marion County (Indianapolis), Indiana	1993
Suffolk County (Boston), Massachusetts	1993
Los Angeles, California	1993
Seattle, Washington (City Attorney)	1995
Howard County, Maryland	1996
Plymouth County (Brockton), Massachusetts	1996
Washington, D.C.	1996
Denver, Colorado	1996
Erie County (Buffalo), New York	1996
Phoenix, Arizona (City Prosecutor)	1996
Santa Clara County, California	1996–97
Pima County (Tucson), Arizona	1997
Honolulu, Hawaii	1997
Jackson County (Kansas City), Missouri	1997
San Diego, California (City Attorney)	1997
Kalamazoo County, Michigan	1998
Cook County (Chicago), Illinois	1998
Nassau County, New York	1998
Knox County, Tennessee	1998
Travis County (Austin), Texas	1999
West Palm Beach, Florida	1999
Hennepin County (Minneapolis), Minnesota	1999
Seminole County, Florida	1999
Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), Ohio	1999
Sacramento County, California	2000
St. Joseph's County (South Bend), Indiana	2000
Placer County, California	2000
Westchester County, New York	2000
Oakland, California	2000
Lackawanna County (Scranton), Pennsylvania	2000

- Case processing adaptations.
- Interagency collaboration or partnerships relating to community prosecution initiatives.

By focusing on the core ingredients of community prosecution strategies, this framework can illustrate the shared structural elements of these initiatives and highlight significant variations or differences as common elements are adapted to meet local needs.

Table 2 details common elements that fall under these critical dimensions.

## **Summary Descriptions of Community Prosecution Sites**

By the end of 2001, the Crime and Justice Research Institute (CJRI) identified and contacted 36 prosecutors' offices that appeared to be operating community prosecution or community-oriented strategies (see table 3 on page xvii).<sup>1</sup> The full report briefly describes the features of these programs. The descriptive overview illustrates the differences among community prosecution strategies on dimensions identified as critical in the working typology of community prosecution sites. The description of community prosecution initiatives is inclusive. We defer, for now, discussion of whether community prosecution is an umbrella concept for all prosecutorial activities directed at crimes located in the community or whether it has a narrower meaning tied to a new, collaborative, and problem-solving relationship with the community.

The summary in the full report is illustrative and descriptive rather than complete. We identified prosecutors' offices involved in what appeared to be community prosecution strategies from lists of grants awarded, available literature, participants and presentations at conferences, and word of mouth among prosecutors involved in community-oriented innovation. After candidate programs were identified, representatives were interviewed to determine what sorts of community prosecution initiatives were under way, if any. The descriptions presented in this monograph rely on self-reported interview information provided by representatives of each site.

The 36 highlighted community prosecution sites are described for two principal reasons. First, the summaries illustrate common key ingredients of diverse community prosecution strategies and provide the fundamentals of a community prosecution model. Second, the descriptions serve as a draft accounting to the field of current community prosecution programs for soliciting feedback and additional information from sites that have been included and others that have not. In short, we expect to develop more complete descriptive summaries with supplemental and critical input from community prosecution sites, whether they are in planning or operational stages.

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<sup>1</sup>Since an earlier version of this report (under the working title *Community Prosecution Strategies: Measuring Impact*) was released in February 2000, CJRI has contacted and profiled nine additional community prosecution initiatives, which are included in this monograph.

**Table 2: Critical Dimensions of Community Prosecution Strategies**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Target Problems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality-of-life offenses.</li> <li>• Drug crime.</li> <li>• Gang violence.</li> <li>• Violent crime.</li> <li>• Juvenile crime.</li> <li>• Truancy.</li> <li>• Prostitution.</li> <li>• Housing and environmental issues.</li> <li>• Landlord/tenant issues.</li> <li>• Failure of the justice system to address community needs.</li> <li>• Community alienation from the prosecutor and other justice agencies.</li> <li>• Improving community relations for better cooperation of victims/witnesses.</li> <li>• Improving intelligence gathering for traditional prosecution of serious cases.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Target Area</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban/inner city.</li> <li>• Rural/suburban.</li> <li>• Business districts.</li> <li>• Residential neighborhoods.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Role of the Community</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recipient of prosecutor services.</li> <li>• Advisory role.</li> <li>• Core participants in problem solving.</li> <li>• Core participants in implementation.</li> <li>• Community justice panels.</li> <li>• Sanctioning panels.</li> <li>• Ad hoc.</li> <li>• Targeted.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>4. Content of Response to Community Problems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating community self-help.</li> <li>• Crime prevention efforts.</li> <li>• Prosecution of cases of interest to the community.</li> <li>• Receiving noncriminal as well as criminal complaints.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>5. Organizational Adaptations/Emphasis in Prosecutor’s Office</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field offices staffed by attorney(s).</li> <li>• Field offices staffed by nonattorney(s).</li> <li>• Attorneys assigned to neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Special unit or units.</li> <li>• Officewide organization around the community prosecution model.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>6. Case Processing Adaptations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vertical prosecution.</li> <li>• Horizontal prosecution.</li> <li>• Geographic prosecution.</li> <li>• Community prosecutors do not prosecute cases.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>7. Interagency and Collaborative Partnerships in Community Prosecution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police.</li> <li>• City attorney.</li> <li>• Housing authority.</li> <li>• Community court/other court.</li> <li>• Other justice agencies (probation, pretrial services).</li> <li>• Other social service agencies.</li> <li>• Other regulatory agencies.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
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**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Manhattan, NY, 1985</i>	<i>Multnomah County, OR, 1990</i>	<i>Kings County, NY, 1991</i>	<i>Middlesex County, MA, 1991</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Community Affairs, New York County District Attorney's Office	Neighborhood DAs, Multnomah County District Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution, Kings County District Attorney's Office	Community Based Justice, Middlesex County District Attorney
<b>Target Problem</b>	Drug-related crime.	Quality-of-life crime.	Quality-of-life crime.	Violent juvenile crime and gangs.
<b>Target Area</b>	Business districts, inner city, urban.	Business districts, rural, suburban, urban (entire county).	Business districts, inner city, urban, (entire borough).	Rural, suburban, urban (entire county).
<b>Community Role</b>	Recipient of service, advisory role.	Advisory role, participants in problem solving and implementation.	Recipients of service, advisory role.	Recipients of service.
<b>Program Content</b>	Nuisance abatement, Narcotics Eviction and Trespass Affidavit programs, projects Focus and Octopus, school programs.	Drug-free zone, responsive problem solving.	Nuisance abatement, formal Trespass Affidavit Program, legal education programs for students and adults.	Community-based agencies share information about juveniles, collaborate on disposition, and provide needed services.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	Vertical prosecution by trial team.	NDA's rarely try cases; prosecutions by trial team.	Trial teams geographically assigned to zones, vertically prosecute cases.	Priority vertical prosecution of community-based justice (CBJ) cases by CBJ attorneys; trial teams are also geographically assigned and try cases from their areas.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Community police, housing authority and transit police, federal and local agencies.	Community court, community police, FBI, U.S. Attorneys, city attorneys, state and local agencies.	Community police, community court, schools.	School officials, police, probation, corrections, social services, local officials, and sometimes community leaders.
<b>Program Location</b>	Main office and one pilot office.	Field offices.	Main office.	Main office.
<b>Community Prosecutor's (CP) Office Organization</b>	Six general trial teams handle cases from all over the jurisdiction (randomly assigned), attorneys with expertise assigned to cases of community importance.	NDA's rarely process cases, but handle uncontested misdemeanors in community court; mainly involved in community outreach and problem solving.	Trial attorneys and community affairs perform outreach in assigned zones.	CBJ attorneys try cases originating from their assigned area; in addition, collaborating with schools and agencies on juvenile issues.
<b>Staff</b>	Ten nonlawyers provide community outreach.	Seven attorneys, two legal assistants.	Trials division performs community outreach in assigned areas, seven nonlawyers and supervisor supplement community outreach.	Fifty attorneys.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Philadelphia, PA, 1992</i>	<i>Marion County, IN, 1993</i>	<i>Suffolk County, MA, 1993</i>	<i>Los Angeles, CA, 1993, 1996</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Public Nuisance Task Force, Philadelphia District Attorney's Office	Street Level Advocates (SLAs), Marion County Prosecutor's Office	Safe Neighborhood Initiative (SNI), Prosecutors in Police Stations, Suffolk County District Attorney	SAGE and CLEAR, Los Angeles County District Attorney
<b>Target Problem</b>	Nuisance properties.	Drug-related crime and public safety issues.	Violent crime.	Gang and drug crime, nuisance abatement.
<b>Target Area</b>	Inner city, urban.	Business districts, rural, suburban, urban.	Business districts, suburban, urban.	Inner city, urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Recipients of service, advisory role.	Advisory role, participant in problem solving.	Recipient of services, advisory role, some participation in problem solving.	Recipient of services, advisory role.
<b>Program Content</b>	Nuisance abatement.	Prostitution initiatives, nuisance abatement, narcotics eviction programs.	Juvenile programs: Operation Nightlight, CBJ.	Drug abatement, antiprostitution, school projects, public nuisance programs.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	CP attorneys try few cases from their assigned area; vertical prosecution by narcotics trial team for serious drug cases only.	SLAs screen and file charges for most felony cases, carry a small caseload, prosecuted vertically.	SNI and PIP attorneys handle many cases from their assigned areas utilizing vertical prosecution; cases not handled by SNI and PIP attorneys are assigned to the trial attorneys.	CLEAR attorneys carry full caseload, priority and vertical prosecution; SAGE attorneys screen cases, carry small caseload, advise police; trials division handles remaining cases by geographic assignment.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, liquor control board, health department, license and inspections, city attorneys.	Community police, community court, sheriff's department, government agencies.	Community police, attorney general's office, mayor's office.	Police, sheriffs, city attorneys, probation.
<b>Program Location</b>	Main office.	Staff stationed in police departments within site.	Neighborhood offices and police districts.	Field offices.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Attorneys involved mainly in outreach and civil nuisance litigation.	CP attorneys try few cases, main responsibility is to handle community outreach and problem solving, advise police.	Attorneys split time between litigation, community outreach, advising police.	SAGE attorneys primarily involved in problem solving, training police, and drafting legislation; CLEAR attorneys primarily focus on prosecuting violating offenders, intervention, and prevention programs.
<b>Staff</b>	Six attorneys.	Six attorneys, four paralegals, one investigator, nuisance abatement coordinator.	Six SNI attorneys, three PIP attorneys, four nonattorney staff persons, community affairs chief.	Eighteen CLEAR attorneys (six city attorneys handle misdemeanors), five SAGE attorneys.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Seattle, WA, 1995</i>	<i>Howard County, MD, 1996</i>	<i>Plymouth County, MA, 1996</i>	<i>Washington, DC, 1996</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Precinct Liaison Program, Seattle City Attorney's Office	The Community Justice Program, Howard County State Attorney	Safe Neighborhood Initiative, State Attorney General and Plymouth County District Attorney	Community Prosecution, Major Crimes Section, US Attorney's Office
<b>Target Problem</b>	Quality-of-life crime, nuisance properties.	Quality-of-life crime, especially youth issues.	Gang and drug crime.	Major crime and nuisance properties.
<b>Target Area</b>	Urban.	Rural, suburban, urban (entire county).	Urban.	Commercial, urban (entire city).
<b>Community Role</b>	Advisory.	Recipient of services, advisory role, participant in problem solving.	Recipient of services, advisory role.	Recipient of services, advisory role.
<b>Program Content</b>	Good neighbor agreements, neighborhood action team.	Initiatives to respond to problems are created as needed, Hot Spot Program.	Abandoned housing project, landlord training and notification letters, and juvenile outreach.	Drug abatement, antiprostitution, school projects and public nuisance programs.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	Some CP attorneys try cases, most litigation handled by trials division and civil unit.	One attorney designated liaison for each county district, carries full caseload, not necessarily from assigned district, priority prosecution-selected misdemeanors, vertical prosecutions of felonies, Hot Spot attorney assigned to highest crime area.	SNI attorneys carry caseload of targeted felony and misdemeanor cases of interest to the community, utilizing priority prosecution-expedited case processing, remaining cases tried by trial attorneys.	Six teams of attorneys geographically assigned to the seven police districts, and dedicated attorneys in the misdemeanor and narcotics divisions try cases vertically; Grand Jury/intake units, assigned geographically, screen cases.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, social and human service agencies, department of corrections.	Police, Department of Juvenile Justice, parole and probation, social service agencies, schools, governor's office.	Attorney general's office, state and local police, Boys & Girls Clubs, mayor's office, community and government officials.	Community police, federal and local agencies, private attorneys.
<b>Program Location</b>	Field offices.	Main office.	Main office.	Attorneys in main office, community outreach specialists stationed in police districts.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Two CP attorneys do not try cases, perform outreach, and act as liaison between community and trial attorney; two CP attorneys carry full caseload from assigned area and perform outreach.	Entire staff of attorneys involved in community outreach and litigate cases; cases randomly assigned, felonies prosecuted vertically; Hot Spot attorney primarily involved in outreach, carries reduced caseload.	SNI attorneys carry full caseload, perform community outreach, and administer problem-solving programs.	Community outreach specialists handle nontraditional problems; civil division handles nuisance issues.
<b>Staff</b>	Four attorneys.	Entire office, 23 full-time and 2 part-time attorneys, involved in CP, 1 Hot Spot attorney.	Two assistant attorneys general, two assistant district attorneys.	Seven community outreach specialists, six trial teams, and Grand Jury/intake teams, all geographically assigned; dedicated misdemeanor and narcotics attorneys, Nuisance Task Force.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Denver, CO, 1996</b>	<b>Erie County, NY, 1996</b>	<b>City of Phoenix, AZ, 1996</b>	<b>Santa Clara County, CA, 1996–1997</b>
<b>Agency</b>	Community Prosecution Program, Denver District Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution, Erie County District Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution, Phoenix City Prosecutor	Community Prosecution Program, Santa Clara District Attorney's Office
<b>Target Problem</b>	Quality-of-life crime.	Quality-of-life misdemeanors.	Quality-of-life misdemeanors, urban blight.	Quality-of-life crime.
<b>Target Area</b>	Urban.	Residential, urban.	Residential, urban.	Commercial, suburban, urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Core participants in problem solving.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.	Advisory, participant in problem solving.
<b>Program Content</b>	Community justice councils, community accountability boards, community safety forums.	Prostitution task force, nuisance abatement.	Prostitution initiatives, nuisance abatement.	Operation Spotlight, restorative justice, community justice centers.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	Attorneys assigned to CP are also assigned to a major crimes unit; they carry a full caseload in their specialized areas, but cases are <i>not</i> geographically assigned.	CP attorney will prosecute selected but substantial caseload of cases important to community, overflow cases randomly assigned to trials division.	CP attorneys try selected cases of community importance, most litigation handled by trials division: criminal cases prosecuted vertically, civil cases randomly assigned.	CPs rarely try cases, primary focus is outreach and problem solving.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Community police, city attorneys, liquor licensing, nuisance abatement, Mayor's Office of Employment and Training, drug court.	Police, corporate council, Office of Community Development.	Neighborhood services, police, health department, housing and planning department, fire department.	Community police, local law enforcement and social service agencies, probation department.
<b>Program Location</b>	Attorneys in main office, community justice advocates located in their assigned neighborhoods.	Main office.	Field offices.	Attorneys split time between main office and field office.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Community outreach mainly handled by nonattorney employees.	CP attorneys main responsibility is community outreach and problem solving.	CP attorneys main responsibility is community outreach and problem solving.	CPs main responsibility is outreach and problem solving, also act as liaisons between community and trial attorneys who handle cases of concern to the neighborhood.
<b>Staff</b>	Director, community justice coordinator, neighborhood justice coordinator, three community justice advocates, eight attorneys, and CAB coordinators (who must reside in the community).	Two attorneys.	Two attorneys.	Seven attorneys.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pima County, AZ, 1997</i>	<i>Jackson County, MO, 1997</i>	<i>Honolulu, HI, 1997</i>	<i>City of San Diego, CA, 1997</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Community Prosecution Unit, Pima County Attorney's Office	Neighborhood Justice Team, Jackson County Prosecutor's Office	Community Prosecution Program, Department of the Prosecuting Attorney for the City and County of Honolulu	Neighborhood Prosecution Unit, San Diego City Attorney's Office
<b>Target Problem</b>	Quality-of-life crime, nuisance properties.	Quality-of-life crime, drug related crime, nuisance properties.	Quality-of-life crime.	Quality-of-life, drug crime.
<b>Target Area</b>	Commercial, residential, suburban, urban.	Rural, suburban, urban.	Business district, suburban, urban.	Urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Advisory, participant in problem solving.	Advisory role, participant in problem solving.	Recipient of services, advisory, participant in problem solving.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.
<b>Program Content</b>	Nuisance property eviction programs, Operation Spotlight.	Child abuse, truancy, nuisance abatement.	Antiprostitution initiatives, youth antiviolence and prevention, school-based programs.	Prostitution task force, Community Safety Initiative, community service centers.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	CPs do not try cases; felony cases randomly assigned to trials division, divided into major crimes, by crime type; misdemeanor cases handled by the city attorney community prosecutor.	Attorneys carry reduced caseload consisting in cases of community importance, originating from their assigned areas, trials division handles overflow cases.	CPs litigate most serious cases and cases of community priority vertically—each handles specialty cases, not necessarily for their assigned area, trials division, organized according to crime type, handles overflow cases.	CP attorneys vertically prosecute reduced caseload of importance to assigned community, trials division handles overflow cases, CP attorney acts as liaison.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, probation, attorney general's office, city attorney.	Local, state, and federal agencies and prosecutors; probation and parole; drug court; area businesses.	Community police, community court, drug court, federal prosecutors, juvenile probation, schools.	Police, social and human services, school district representatives.
<b>Program Location</b>	Attorney maintains office space in main office, spends majority of time in field office.	Attorneys split time between main office and field office.	Main office.	Field offices.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Does not try cases, primary focus is outreach and problem solving, some civil litigation.	CP attorneys' main responsibility is community outreach and problem solving.	CPs try many cases, CP attorneys are each assigned geographic area for outreach but try cases from all three areas.	CP attorneys primarily involved in community outreach and administering problem-solving programs.
<b>Staff</b>	One full-time and one part-time attorney.	Six attorneys.	Three attorneys.	Four attorneys.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Kalamazoo County, MI, 1998</i>	<i>Cook County, IL, 1998</i>	<i>Nassau County, NY, 1998</i>	<i>Knox County, TN, 1998</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Neighborhood Prosecuting Attorney Program, Kalamazoo County Prosecuting Attorney	Community Prosecution Program, Cook County State Attorney	Community Crime Prevention, Nassau County District Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution Program, Knox County District Attorney General's Office
<b>Target Problem</b>	Quality-of-life crime.	Quality-of-life crime.	Quality-of-life crime.	Truancy.
<b>Target Area</b>	Commercial, residential, urban.	Commercial, residential, suburban, urban.	Suburban, urban.	Suburban, rural, urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Recipient of services, advisory role, participant in problem solving.	Advisory role, participant in problem solving.	Advisory role, participate in problem solving.	Advisory.
<b>Program Content</b>	Truancy and curfew programs, nuisance property programs.	Summer Opportunity Program for kids; hate crimes unit.	Rising Star, trespass/eviction.	Truancy review board and center.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	Neighborhood prosecutors carry small caseload of cases important to the community, prosecuted vertically, majority of cases litigated by trial teams.	CPs vertically prosecute a substantial caseload important to their assigned community, track cases, and advise trial attorneys on overflow cases.	CPs handle misdemeanors from their sites in community court, trial attorneys try CP cases with input and guidance from community prosecutors.	CP attorney handles all matters related to truancy, trials division continues to handle traditional litigation.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Community police, city agencies, Boys & Girl's Clubs.	City services, local officials, city attorney, police, parks authority, school board, social services.	Boys & Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Sisters, police, schools, social services, local officials, community court.	Police, schools, social and human service agencies.
<b>Program Location</b>	Field office.	Field office.	Main offices.	Juvenile courthouse.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Neighborhood prosecutors focus on community outreach.	CPs divide time between litigation, community outreach, and problem solving.	CP attorneys primarily responsible for outreach and administering community-based programs.	CP attorneys primarily concerned with truancy issues.
<b>Staff</b>	Two attorneys.	Eleven attorneys, including two supervisors and prevention coordinator.	Five attorneys.	One attorney, one paralegal.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<b>Site</b>	<b><i>Travis County, TX, 1999</i></b>	<b><i>West Palm Beach, FL, 1999</i></b>	<b><i>Hennepin County, MN, 1999</i></b>	<b><i>Montgomery County, MD, 1999</i></b>
<b>Agency</b>	Neighborhood DA program, Travis County District Attorney	COMBAT, Palm Beach State Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution, Hennepin County Attorney	Community Prosecution, Montgomery County State's Attorney
<b>Target Problem</b>	Felony level quality-of-life cases.	Drug- and vice-related crime.	Felony level "livability" offenses, juvenile crime.	Neighborhood crime.
<b>Target Area</b>	Urban.	Inner city, urban.	Residential, urban.	Entire county.
<b>Community Role</b>	Advisory role, participate in problem solving.	Advisory role, participate in problem solving.	Advisory role, participate in problem solving.	Advisory role.
<b>Program Content</b>	Community justice councils.	Nuisance abatement, narcotics eviction, legal education and mentoring programs in the schools.	Restorative justice, nuisance abatement.	Nuisance abatement, Elder Abuse Task Force.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	Neighborhood DA screens cases from assigned area; prosecutes small caseload of cases important to the community; tracks and provides assistance upon request of trial attorney for majority of cases.	COMBAT attorneys vertically prosecute a reduced caseload of cases important to their assigned community; major crimes trial unit tries overflow cases with input from CP attorneys.	CPs vertically prosecute a full caseload originating from their districts, except violent and drug-crime cases, which are handled by specialty trial attorneys.	Trials division geographically assigned to prosecute all cases originating from their districts; felony cases prosecuted vertically, responsible for community outreach.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, social service providers, law enforcement officials.	Community police, community court, state and federal agencies, schools.	State and local law enforcement and social service agencies, schools, community court.	Police, sheriffs, schools, civic groups, faith-based organizations, chambers of commerce, apartment and property managers, and county attorneys.
<b>Program Location</b>	Field office.	Field office and main office.	Field office.	Three senior attorneys assigned to field offices, remaining attorneys assigned to main office.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Trial attorneys are randomly assigned to try CP cases with input from CP; CP attorney screens cases from her area, acts as liaison to trial attorney, primary focus is outreach.	CP attorneys litigate, participate in police investigation, screen community cases, and perform outreach and problem solving.	CP attorneys divide time between litigation and community outreach.	Senior attorneys carry reduced caseload, screen cases, responsible for more community outreach.
<b>Staff</b>	One attorney.	Five attorneys, one paralegal, one secretary.	Four attorneys; attorneys divide time between litigation and community outreach.	Fifty-nine attorneys.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Brevard/Seminole County, FL, 1999</i>	<i>Cuyahoga County, OH, 1999</i>	<i>Westchester County, NY, 2000</i>	<i>Oakland, CA, 2000</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Neighborhood State Attorney Initiative, Florida State Attorney's Office	Community-Based Prosecution, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office	Community Prosecution, Westchester County District Attorney's Office	Community prosecution, Oakland City Attorney's Office
<b>Target Problem</b>	Quality-of-life, urban blight, drug crime, juvenile issues.	Quality-of-life, juvenile issues.	Quality-of-life crime, focus on youthful offenders.	Nuisance properties, urban blight.
<b>Target Area</b>	Residential, rural, urban.	Urban.	Commercial, residential, suburban, urban.	Commercial, residential, urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Advisory.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.	Advisory role, participate in problem solving.	Advisory role.
<b>Program Content</b>	Problem solving.	Neighborhood centers, truancy center.	Youth programs.	Nuisance abatement.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	CP attorneys primarily handle outreach, may carry caseload of community impact cases, most litigation handled by trials division, felonies assigned randomly.	CP attorneys carry slightly reduced caseload, prosecute vertically, overflow cases assigned randomly to trials division, must consult with CP attorneys for advice on CP cases and approval of plea agreement.	CP attorney will vertically prosecute selected cases of community importance, overflow cases assigned to trials divisions.	CP attorney to file civil suits on behalf of assigned neighborhood, county district attorney has jurisdiction over all criminal cases.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, coalition group of volunteer social and human services and faith based organization representatives.	Police, social and human services, state and local agencies, school officials.	Community police, schools, social service agencies.	Police, county district attorney.
<b>Program Location</b>	Field offices.	Field offices.	Branch office.	Main office.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	CP attorneys mainly responsible for community outreach and problem solving, focus on identifying major crime issues.	CP attorneys primarily concerned with outreach, assisted by nonattorney outreach coordinators.	Primary responsibility community outreach and problem solving.	CP attorney primarily responsible for civil litigation and coordination of problem-solving efforts.
<b>Staff</b>	Three attorneys, three paralegals.	Six attorneys.	One coordinator, one attorney to be assigned.	One attorney, one paralegal.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Lackawanna County, PA, 2000</i>	<i>Placer County, CA, 2000</i>	<i>Sacramento County, CA, 2000</i>	<i>St. Joseph's County, IN, 2000</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Community Prosecution Program, Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office	Community and Agency Multidisciplinary Elder Team, Placer County District Attorney	Community Prosecution, Sacramento County District Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution, Prosecuting Attorney, St. Joseph's County
<b>Target Problem</b>	Poorly maintained buildings/absentee landlords, drug crime.	Elder abuse.	Poorly maintained hotels, quality-of-life crime, drug crime.	Quality-of-life crime.
<b>Target Area</b>	Urban, rural.	Entire county.	Urban.	Commercial, residential, urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Advisory, participate in problem solving.	Advisory.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.
<b>Program Content</b>	Criminal justice councils, community advisory panel, school-based justice program.	Collaborative community education and prevention program.	Good neighbor agreements, community forums, legal education classes for the community.	Pretrial diversion, responsive problem solving.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	CP attorneys carry reduced caseload consisting of low level crime arising from their assigned communities, overflow cases assigned to trials teams.	CP attorney vertically prosecutes all cases of elder abuse.	CP attorneys vertically prosecute reduced caseload from assigned neighborhood, overflow cases assigned to trials division, must provide updates to CP attorneys on CP cases and instructions about cases are included in each file.	CP attorneys screen and charge cases from their areas; vertically prosecute reduced caseload of cases important to the community.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, HUD, schools, social and human service agencies.	Police, mental health, public guardian, adult protective services, health care providers, probation.	Police, city council, social and human services agencies.	Area businesspeople, police, hospitals, health department, housing authority, probation, school authorities, mayor's office.
<b>Program Location</b>	Field offices and main office split time.	Main office.	Field offices.	Field offices.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	CP attorneys perform outreach and handle limited low-level litigation.	Not applicable.	CP attorneys primarily involved in community outreach and administering problem-solving programs.	Trial division tries majority of cases from CP sites with input and assistance from CP attorneys.
<b>Staff</b>	Six attorneys.	One attorney, one investigator.	Six attorneys.	Three attorneys, one nuisance abatement officer, one program director.



## **Measuring Impact: Challenges of Community Prosecution Strategies**

The problem of measuring the impact of community prosecution—particularly given its diverse adaptations—begins with understanding what the innovation is (and is not) and what it proposes to accomplish. The community prosecution “model” represents a philosophy as well as an innovation. The shared philosophy seeks to connect the prosecution function more directly with the community, to develop a new and more collaborative working relationship, and to be more responsive to the community’s crime-related concerns. The form this idea takes varies considerably from location to location and from prosecutor to prosecutor along the dimensions outlined in the working typology of community prosecution strategies.

Many of the elements of community prosecution—attorneys dispersed to different geographic locations, vertical prosecution, cases assigned to reflect the geography of the community, considerably more time spent interacting with the community—represent notable departures from traditional modes of functioning, depending on the level of commitment a prosecutor’s office has to the philosophy, and raise difficult questions about impact and resource allocation. Prosecutors who lead these efforts and their funding sources have begun to demand evaluation of whether and how community prosecution works. The challenges for research in measuring the strengths and weaknesses of community prosecution are commensurate with the challenges posed by community-oriented strategies to traditional prosecution functions.

This monograph proposes a multidimensional framework for conceptualizing community prosecution evaluation measures that recognizes the distinct and joint roles played by the prosecution and the community and, in addition, defines areas of impact based on key dimensions in the typology shared by community prosecution initiatives across the nation. The framework differentiates between measures appropriate for assessing the implementation of community prosecution and measures reflecting outcomes or impact of community prosecution programs, after they have been effectively implemented (see table 4.)

**Table 4: Conceptualizing Measures of Community Prosecution Impact**

<i>Key Dimensions</i>	<b>Elements of Community Prosecution Innovation</b>		
	<b>Prosecution Function</b>	<b>Community Role</b>	<b>Interaction of Both</b>
<b>Target Problems</b>			
<i>Implementation</i>	Types/number of problems identified.	Input in defining problems and designing strategies.	Collaboration in identifying and addressing problems.
	Strategies implemented to address.	Participation in implementing strategies.	
<i>Outcomes</i>	Outcomes per problem area.	Community improvement. Accountability. Community satisfaction/ownership with outcomes.	Problems successfully addressed.
<b>Target Area</b>			
<i>Implementation</i>	Services, actions added per geographic areas.	Cooperation and assistance.	Defining, agreeing to area.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Improved measures of targeted problems in geographic areas.	Improved working relationship.	
<b>Role of Community</b>			
<i>Implementation</i>	Types/methods/frequency of involvement.	Types/method/frequency of involvement.	Access to government and policy formulation.
	Problems identified. Suggested strategies.	Community access. Suggested strategies.	
<i>Outcomes</i>	Improved community links.	Improved community access/participation.	More effective communication on crime and related problems.
	Improved satisfaction. Better impact on targeted problems.	Improved satisfaction. Impact on targeted areas. Improved accountability.	Ownership.
<b>Content of Community Prosecution Strategy</b>			
<i>Implementation</i>	Specific programs, components, services instituted.	Specific role, cooperation, participant, and recipient of services.	Project-specific functions.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Impact of specific programs (youth, drugs, graffiti, nuisance, prostitution, etc.).	Community view of impact and success.	Measure of success and impact.

**Table 4: Conceptualizing Measures of Community Prosecution Impact (continued)**

<i>Key Dimensions</i>	<b>Elements of Community Prosecution Innovation</b>		
	<b>Prosecution Function</b>	<b>Community Role</b>	<b>Interaction of Both</b>
<b>Organization of Prosecution</b> <i>Implementation</i>	Geographic assignment.  Reorganization. New procedures/staff, assessment/values.  New programs.	Organization and representation. Areas/neighborhoods. Access to prosecutor/ other agencies/ resources.	New partnerships.  Improved prosecution.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Office effectiveness, efficiency.  Relative costs. Culture change/ acceptance. Impact of new procedures. Improved reputation.	Effectiveness of procedures for participation.	New procedures for collaboration.
<b>Prosecutor Workload</b> <i>Implementation</i>	Content of workday/ lawyer. Contact with community/outreach. Identification of problem areas. Litigation/vertical.		
<i>Outcomes</i>	Community contacts. Problems identified. Strategies decided. Matters addressed/type. Resolutions/cases/types. Staff satisfaction.		
<b>Collaboration/ Partnerships</b> <i>Implementation</i>	New working relations with agencies and organizations. Expanded planning. Added multiagency services.	New overall working relationship.	New planning, problem-solving role.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Impact of collaboration on services and outcomes/problems.		Routinization and growth of relationship.



# Introduction

With increasing frequency over the past decade, prosecutors across the United States have been developing community-focused strategies to address crime problems, using methods that depart dramatically from their traditional roles. Taken at their most challenging, community prosecution strategies may signal a major milestone in changing the culture and role of the prosecutor by developing partnerships and collaborative problem-solving approaches with the community to improve the quality of life and safety of citizens in their neighborhoods. The most innovative community prosecution initiatives pose fundamental questions about the prosecutor's function, the ways in which the prosecutor seeks justice, and how the prosecutor's office is organized and operated. These strategies suggest an important shift in traditional prosecutorial philosophy, as prosecutors emphasize community-focused crime strategies and adapt some of the values and methods of other community justice innovations that relate to community policing, court, corrections, and restorative justice initiatives.

This monograph describes the emergence of community prosecution strategies. It identifies some of their common elements in a working typology based on features of innovations that are operating in diverse settings across the United States. Discussion of community prosecution strategies is illustrated with examples from sites across the nation.<sup>2</sup> The monograph concludes by describing some of the challenges posed by community prosecution strategies for assessing impact and measuring performance.

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<sup>2</sup>Officials in the following 36 locations were interviewed about community prosecution programs: Manhattan, New York; Portland, Oregon; Kings County, Brooklyn, New York; Montgomery County, Maryland; Middlesex County, Massachusetts; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Marion County, Indiana; Suffolk County, Massachusetts; Los Angeles, California; Seattle, Washington; Howard County, Maryland; Plymouth County, Massachusetts; Washington, D.C.; Denver, Colorado; Erie County, New York; Phoenix, Arizona; Santa Clara, California; Pima County, Arizona; Honolulu, Hawaii; Kansas City, Missouri; San Diego, California; Cook County, Chicago, Illinois; Kalamazoo, Michigan; Nassau County, New York; Knox County, Tennessee; Bronx, New York; West Palm Beach, Florida; Hennepin County, Minnesota; Brevard/Seminole County, Florida; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Sacramento County, California; Providence, Rhode Island; St. Joseph's County, Indiana; Placer County, California; Westchester County, New York; Oakland, California; Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania. Additional sites are included in this report based on written materials and/or information provided at conferences or workshops.



## The Prosecutor and the Community

Traditionally, a local prosecutor's office would have little direct contact with the public. Its work focused on preparing criminal cases generated by arrests for formal adjudication in court. Neighborhood-level crime problems were not an immediate focus of the prosecutor's staff. The family, neighborhood, and institutions such as churches and schools normally exerted effective social control over nuisance crime problems. Law enforcement was called on primarily to deal with the more serious matters (Pound, 1930). A substantial body of literature on American cities documents that, for various reasons, neighborhoods changed because of larger social changes in family structures and institutions, gradually exercising less informal constraint on the behavior of their residents. As early as 1930, Roscoe Pound described a theme that has pervaded criminal justice thinking until recently, the unreasonable expectation that formal criminal justice agencies should somehow be responsible for social order and replace the informal mechanisms (e.g., family, church, school) that had become less effective.

According to Pound, "This complete change in the background of social control involves much that may easily be attributed to the ineffectiveness of criminal justice, and yet means only that it is called on to do the whole work, where once it shared its task with other agencies and was invoked, not for every occasion, but exceptionally" (Pound, 1930: 14–15).

For more than 2 centuries, the prosecutor's role has been transformed from a rather unimportant one—as a judicial adjunct presenting cases to the grand jury, filing information, dismissing cases filed by the police, plea bargaining, and prosecuting cases at trial—to a powerful executive branch function with considerable discretion in the contemporary justice system (McDonald, 1979; Gottfredson and Gottfredson, 1987; Jacoby, 1980). Although police have traditionally taken criminal complaints from victims, investigated crimes, and interacted with the community, the prosecutor's role grew to include the power to investigate. This power evolved particularly during the early 20th century (Pound, 1930: 182; National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, 1931: 12) with a rationale dating back to a 1704 statute in Connecticut, the first state to codify the office of the prosecutor. That statute provided that the county attorney should prosecute criminal offenders and do "all other things necessary or convenient . . . to suppress vice and immorality." Whether through historical interpretation of the prosecutor's evolving powers or the prosecutor's broad discretion in pursuing justice, the rationale for a community prosecution function can be traced to an interpretation of the prosecutor's role to include responsibilities to suppress or prevent crime.

## **Community and Criminal Justice**

The topic of “community” has long been at the core of crime theory and criminal justice policy, variously defined in a substantial body of literature in terms of location, physical environment, residential or commercial land use, class, race, and ethnicity (Massey, 1985; Anderson, 1990; Squires, 1994; Taylor and Covington, 1988). From the earliest days of criminology the connection between community and crime has been an important theme, from Ferri’s (1896) discussion of “telluric” and environmental causes of crime, through the work of the Chicago School in considering the urban environment’s relation to crime (Park et al., 1925; Burgess, 1926; Shaw and McKay, 1969 [1942]), to current discussions of the relationships between crime, social organization, and physical attributes of communities (Newman, 1980; Sampson and Grove, 1989; Bursik, 1986; Taylor, 1995, 2000).

The emphasis on community in discussions of criminal justice administration and policy also has a long history. In the early part of the century, Pound argued that one of the most important problems of criminal justice in the United States was to “apply and enforce law in a heterogeneous community, divided into classes with divergent interests, which understand each other none too well, containing elements hostile to government and order, containing elements ignorant of our institutions . . . where conditions of crowded urban life and economic pressure threaten the security of social institutions” (Pound, 1913: 311). Pound argued that the administration of justice should be based on “thorough knowledge of the social conditions . . . for which law must be devised and to which it must be applied” (1913: 327).

Since the 1960s, the concept of community, variously defined, has continued to surface as an important criminal justice focus. For example, community corrections, a concept with origins dating back more than a century, was an active area of correctional innovation during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s (Harris, 1995). During the 1960s War on Poverty, empowering the poor in the United States was a principal focus of community organization strategies that dealt with fundamental societal and community justice issues (Brager and Purcell, 1967; Kramer and Specht, 1969). As the civil disorder and urban riots of the late 1960s manifested the alienation and disenfranchisement of poor and minority communities, the relationship between the community and the police became a primary focus of justice reform strategies (President’s Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, 1967; U.S. National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, 1970). Problem-oriented and community policing initiatives of the 1980s and 1990s were developed to better ensure that community concerns were fully addressed by police agencies (Davis, 1975; Goldstein, 1990; Rosenbaum, 1994). More recently, the traditional posture of the courts, to be less connected to the problems of the community, was fundamentally challenged with the establishment of the Midtown Community Court in 1993, which sought a much closer working relationship with the community and was a catalyst for increasingly diverse community-oriented justice initiatives.

All of these and other community-oriented crime and justice foci form the background against which current community prosecution strategies have emerged and can be understood. Attempts to characterize, analyze, or measure the impact of this emerging innovation will have to consider the specific meaning of “community” for community prosecution, including how the community is involved and how the prosecution focus on the community differs both from other approaches in criminal justice and from traditional prosecution.

## **Relevance of the Community Justice Movement**

Community justice innovation has taken many forms across the country and is spreading across different governmental agencies. It has resulted in the development of innovative programs that include community policing, probation, courts, and prosecution, all sharing the goal of making the justice system more relevant and accessible to the community, and making better use of the community as a resource to address the crime problem. Starting with community policing, the criminal justice system has reoriented itself to seek contact with, and input from, neighborhood residents on issues of importance to them and to address issues of civil disorder. Foot patrol, which had been discredited by criminal justice officials since the 1940s (Wilson and Kelling, 1989), reemerged as a sound policing method when special units were created to solve community problems. Community policing has gained such popularity that a majority of America’s police departments have reportedly adopted some version of the approach (Peak and Glensor, 1996: 68, in Karp, 1998: 5). Many of these programs have garnered the favor of community members, reduced fear of crime, and purportedly contributed to reductions in crime (Wilson and Kelling, 1989).

Community justice issues began to be addressed by courts as an indirect result of the establishment of drug courts in the early 1990s, but they were the fundamental emphasis of the Midtown Community Court experiment when it began operation in Manhattan in 1993 (Sviridoff et al., 2000). The creative reforms and leadership demonstrated in the Midtown Community Court have been adapted by jurisdictions across the country as localities tailor community court approaches to quality-of-life offenses and related issues that community members identify as disruptive to their community. The collaboration between judicial leaders and the community that is at the core of the community court model has demonstrated techniques and strategies that are valuable for a variety of community justice initiatives, including community prosecution.

## **Community Prosecution as a Community Justice Strategy**

Community prosecution has been described as a “grassroots approach to law enforcement involving both traditional and nontraditional prosecutorial initiatives” (Weinstein, 1998: 19). In some jurisdictions, community prosecution initiatives were sparked by the implementation of community policing and were logical, complementary extensions of the focus on community issues to the prosecutor’s function (Hankins and Weinstein, 1996). In locations without community policing programs, community prosecution strategies were

developed to respond to community crime and public safety issues that were not being addressed sufficiently by the police. In several locations, community prosecution strategies are linked to community court initiatives.

In many instances, community prosecution involves deploying prosecutors or nonlegal staff in the community to better identify residents' concerns and to invite their participation in developing strategies for addressing problems of crime and social disorder that are their highest priority. Prosecutors involved in these outreach efforts often find that community residents do not share the prosecutor's traditional concern with the prosecution of serious crimes. Although the community may assume that these matters will always be a priority, their immediate concerns more often focus on the nuisance or quality-of-life crimes that make life in the neighborhood unsafe or unpleasant.

As other community justice initiatives have revealed, this community focus on crime issues differs strikingly from the general orientation of the justice system. Scarce resources and an increasing volume of serious, particularly drug-related, criminal cases have caused law enforcement agencies to try to handle the most serious matters, by default deemphasizing the more numerous minor offenses in the community. With this focus on punishing serious crime, few deterrent measures have been available to address nuisance-level offenses, for which jail sanctions are usually inappropriate and generally not imposed. As with policing and community court leaders, prosecutors have discovered that problems identified by the community as most important to them in their daily lives are generally not of the serious-crime type that the criminal justice system appears most ready to handle.

As an example, even when community leaders are concerned with drug dealing in the neighborhood, prosecution of the dealers has little immediate impact on the neighborhood. As the slow process of adjudication of their cases is carried out, drug dealers are often back on the street, or new dealers quickly take their place. Even if prosecution is successful, community residents may be frustrated because of their perception that law enforcement is not responsive to their calls for help (Boland, 1998a: 253–54). Community prosecution strategies have grown as the result of a need, partly political, to be more responsive to community issues and to expand the prosecutor's role beyond its traditional one of prosecuting cases.

As prosecutors' offices have attempted to devise strategies that are more responsive to community concerns, problem solving has become a major focus of community prosecution programs. From developing plans to clean up and better maintain public parks to using civil sanctions to attack nuisance issues, many prosecutor's offices have implemented procedures that depart from their traditional focus on prosecuting criminal cases to seeking ways to prevent and reduce crime. These community-oriented strategies have in common a new collaboration with community members in identifying problems and devising solutions. The value of this collaboration has been demonstrated in successful community prosecution sites and other community justice initiatives, empowering the community to define its problems, participate in solutions, and bring informal social control mechanisms of the community into play in ways that complement the efforts of law

enforcement and the justice system. Both prosecutors and police derive benefits from a collaborative partnership with the community. The community's respect for, and trust in, official agencies is enhanced; potential witnesses for trial may cooperate better; and residents may be more helpful in providing the intelligence needed to address serious crime problems.

The collaboration that characterizes community prosecution initiatives is not limited to new working relationships with community partners. It extends to new working relationships with other government and social service agencies outside the criminal justice system with responsibilities in areas that affect community crime and quality-of-life problems. The resolution of problems identified in various jurisdictions has involved agencies with responsibilities in areas such as street lighting and repair, licensing and regulating bars, housing and building code enforcement, parks and recreational services, drug treatment, health care, mental health care, childcare, and family and indigent services. In jurisdictions focusing on youth-related issues, schools, juvenile justice agencies, and other organizations that serve the needs of young people have also become involved.



# Emergence of Community Prosecution Strategies

The emergence and diffusion of community prosecution as an innovation is difficult to reconstruct with accuracy because many prosecutors across the nation have been dealing with community issues in various ways for some time. A good historical case can be made that community prosecution preceded rather than followed community policing reforms, drawing its substance instead from community organization innovations of the 1960s. The establishment of Cook County State's Attorney Bernard Carey's community prosecution program in Chicago, in 1973, predates the first community policing program and was clearly influenced by the active community organization initiatives in Chicago in the 1960s.

More recently, although in many jurisdictions the prosecutor's office took the lead in initiating community-oriented strategies, in others the success of local community police programs nearly demanded prosecutorial changes. In Indiana, Marion County District Attorney Scott Newman has indicated that the favorable relationship he saw growing between community police and the residents of Indianapolis challenged him to change the organization of his office. He feared that if he did not make direct and favorable contact with the community, residents would focus on the prosecutors as the "bad guys" responsible for any system failures (Coles and Kelling, 1999: 74). In discussions of his groundbreaking innovations in Portland, Oregon, beginning in 1990, Multnomah County District Attorney Michael Schrunk stressed the importance of community policing reforms in catalyzing his community prosecution initiatives.

Although community prosecution strategies have adapted some of the same principals and techniques seen in community policing, the prosecution focus on community strategies adds a distinctive dimension to community justice initiatives. Ronald Goldstock (1992: 3, 49) argues that the prosecutor's office is best suited to take the lead in creating criminal justice policy based on problem-solving methods for a number of reasons. One is that the prosecutor's legal expertise is needed to make use of civil methods such as forfeitures, injunctions, and civil damage actions, which can be effective alternatives to criminal prosecution in addressing a wide range of neighborhood problems. Another, Goldstock suggests (1992: 8-9), is that because the jurisdiction of most prosecutors' offices is geographically broader than that of individual police or other law enforcement agencies (sometimes encompassing many police precincts or districts), policy set by prosecutors is likely to have a more widespread impact. In addition, prosecutors have greater access to and political influence on judges and legislators than do police and their support is essential to creating and implementing policy changes. Finally, as elected officials, prosecutors have greater power to "sell" alternative, nontraditional responses to crime to the public (Gramckow, 1997).

Estimates vary as to how many prosecutors' offices in the United States have adopted some version of a community prosecution strategy.<sup>3</sup> Certainly, the problems thrust on the criminal justice system by drug crimes and drug enforcement during the 1980s and 1990s forced prosecutors and other officials to think of new strategies to cope with the overwhelming criminal caseload. This included ways to free neighborhoods of problems related to drug crime, dealing, and use. In 1985 for example, in response to the advent of crack cocaine in New York, Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau instituted a community-focused approach through a Community Affairs Unit that sent an experienced nonattorney employee into the community to improve community relations and gather intelligence to better prosecute drug crimes.

The origins of the contemporary community prosecution movement are most often traced back to the pioneering efforts of Multnomah County District Attorney Michael Schrunk. In 1990, Schrunk established the Neighborhood District Attorneys Unit in Portland, Oregon, in response to the concerns of business leaders that quality-of-life crimes would impede development of a central business district (Boland, 1998a). Other community-oriented prosecution innovations followed, in 1991 in Kings County (Brooklyn), New York, under District Attorney Charles J. Hynes and, in 1992 in Montgomery County, Maryland, under then-State's Attorney Andrew Sonner. Both initiatives involved major reorganization of the prosecutors' offices along geographic lines and established new working links with the communities in each area. Also in 1991, the Community-Based Justice Program began operation in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, and, in 1993, the Street Level Advocacy Program was instituted in Marion County (Indianapolis), Indiana. After the early 1990s, additional jurisdictions adapted the innovation and it spread more rapidly (see table 1).

Recognition that the prosecutor's responsibilities should or could include a crime reduction or community crime prevention function is not new. Discussion of the importance of the prosecutor's responsibility to work to prevent crime and to address problems associated with minor crimes has been in evidence for much of the last century, considerably earlier than the quality-of-life emphases of recent community justice initiatives. In the *National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement: Report on Prosecution* of 1931, Alfred Bettman indicated that the more serious cases were not "necessarily, from the point of view of crime reduction or crime prevention, the most significant" (Bettman, in Wickersham, 1931: 82–83). Bettman cited the 1922 report of the Cleveland Crime Commission which noted that "[T]he general peace and security are more dependent on society's treatment of the regular flow of ordinary crimes than on the results of the few great murder cases which attract public attention and create public excitement" (Fosdick et al., 1922).

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<sup>3</sup>The American Prosecutors Research Institute reports that about one-third of prosecutors responding to a national survey indicated that they were doing community prosecution. APRI estimates that 80 sites in the United States are operating some type of community prosecution program, 33 sites received targeted federal funding in 1999–2000, and 176 jurisdictions have pending applications for funding (see [www.ndaa.org/apri/Community\\_Prosecution](http://www.ndaa.org/apri/Community_Prosecution)). These estimates do not include city attorneys' offices that are running such efforts in some jurisdictions. Some operating programs have gotten under way without federal funding specifically targeted toward community prosecution, using Local Law Enforcement Block Grants, open solicitation grants, or other sources that make them more difficult to identify.

**Table 1: Chronology of Community Prosecution Sites**

Manhattan, New York	1985
Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon	1990
Kings County (Brooklyn), New York	1991
Montgomery County, Maryland	1991
Middlesex County, Massachusetts	1991
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	1991
Marion County (Indianapolis), Indiana	1993
Suffolk County (Boston), Massachusetts	1993
Los Angeles, California	1993
Seattle, Washington (City Attorney)	1995
Howard County, Maryland	1996
Plymouth County (Brockton), Massachusetts	1996
Washington, D.C.	1996
Denver, Colorado	1996
Erie County (Buffalo), New York	1996
Phoenix, Arizona (City Prosecutor)	1996
Santa Clara County, California	1996–97
Pima County (Tucson), Arizona	1997
Honolulu, Hawaii	1997
Jackson County (Kansas City), Missouri	1997
San Diego, California (City Attorney)	1997
Kalamazoo County, Michigan	1998
Cook County (Chicago), Illinois	1998
Nassau County, New York	1998
Knox County, Tennessee	1998
Travis County (Austin), Texas	1999
West Palm Beach, Florida	1999
Hennepin County (Minneapolis), Minnesota	1999
Seminole County, Florida	1999
Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), Ohio	1999
Sacramento County, California	2000
St. Joseph's County (South Bend), Indiana	2000
Placer County, California	2000
Westchester County, New York	2000
Oakland, California	2000
Lackawanna County (Scranton), Pennsylvania	2000

In the 1971 draft “Standards for Criminal Justice, Standards Relating to the Prosecution Function and the Defense Function,” the American Bar Association discussed the prosecutor’s crime prevention function, as well as the prosecutor’s accountability to the public in noting that “[T]he prosecutor is the leader of law enforcement in the community. He is expected to participate actively in marshalling society’s resources against the threat of crime” (American Bar Association, 1971: 18–21).

In the same year, Evelle Younger, then-Attorney General of California, wrote of the prosecutor’s responsibility as a community leader in directing and enlisting the community toward the goal of crime prevention and order maintenance. According to Younger, “A prosecutor worthy of the position must use the mantle which has been placed on his shoulders to assume a role of leadership in the entire community and help bring what has been characterized as a ‘sick community’ back to a condition where decent people can live peacefully in the enjoyment of their rights and property without the fear of molestation or attack from the criminal element . . . . The prosecutor must encourage citizen participation by convincing the people in his community that the war on crime cannot be won until all responsible persons become involved . . . . There is a great untapped resource of public activity which, if properly guided by a prosecutor who is a true leader, can accomplish much more in suppressing crime than a series of arrests and successful prosecutions . . . . The district attorney . . . is challenged by that responsibility to take affirmative steps to marshal the community resources and actively work at crime prevention” (Healy and Manak, 1971: 4–6).

Younger also believed that the prosecutor must be willing to innovate and experiment and “must constantly be on the lookout outside the traditional scope of the prosecutor’s office for new ways to improve the system and to suppress crime” (Healy and Manak, 1971: 4–5).

The use of civil remedies as a crime prevention weapon seen in some contemporary community prosecution strategies also has earlier origins. The report of the American Bar Foundation (Miller, 1969: 241–252) devotes a chapter to the use of civil sanctions as a more effective tool for addressing certain types of crime. It discusses the civil procedure of padlocking premises, combined with securing injunctions to prevent property owners from performing similar illegal actions in the future, as a method for nuisance abatement. “Law enforcement officers have pointed out that prostitution, gambling and liquor violations are not controllable if the only control device used is arrest of the violators followed by prosecution, even if convictions are relatively easy to obtain. The sentences are so light that the violators are not deterred from returning to the same type of illegal conduct . . . . To prevent the necessity for those arrests and prosecutions in the future, the alternative of padlocking the premises is utilized” (Miller, 1969: 242). Other civil sanctions long in use by prosecutors as alternatives to prosecution are forfeiture of vehicles used in crime and revocation of liquor licenses to prevent future illegal conduct in establishments where alcohol is sold.

Like many police agencies in the aftermath of the 1960s, some prosecutors specifically incorporated community relations sections into their offices during the 1970s. In 1977, Harris County, Texas, District Attorney Carol Vance, who also served as president of the National District Attorneys Association, wrote an article discussing the importance of the relationship between the prosecutor's office and the community (Vance, 1977: 131–43). Vance stressed the importance of positive community relations and emphasized the need to educate the community about what the prosecutor's office does.

Vance's office implemented community-oriented educational programs in Harris County targeting middle and high school age children and adults. These efforts included speakers' bureaus through which prosecutors were sent to give talks at schools on criminal justice issues. Vance used the press to encourage public participation in anticrime programs. In addition, a citizen advisory committee was formed in his community, made up of former grand jurors, minority community leaders, the board of the Chamber of Commerce, criminal justice professionals, church leaders, and other concerned citizens who were representative of the community. The committee was kept informed of office activities through a semiannual report that described major accomplishments and the operations of each division in the office and was used as a sounding board for office priorities. For example, Vance writes, "the reaction of the committee to pornography indicated the vast majority wanted our office to aggressively prosecute in this area" (Vance, 1977: 140). Vance stressed the value of interagency collaboration as part of a community focus. He noted the importance of coordinating the operations of law enforcement agencies to achieve mutual goals, conduct effective interagency operations, and enhance public confidence in the entire law enforcement community. His assistant prosecutors provided training for the police on issues of law and procedure. Vance also discussed the importance of positive relations with the Governor's office and the legislators in the interest of promoting anticrime legislation.



# Chicago's Community Prosecutions Unit: An Early Community Prosecution Prototype

Possibly the earliest direct precursor to current community prosecution initiatives was the Community Prosecutions program created in 1974 by Cook County State Attorney Bernard Carey in Chicago, Illinois, to respond to particular citizen complaints.<sup>4</sup> Many of the elements found in community prosecution programs today were evident in Carey's pioneering initiative. The Cook County State Attorney's program focused on ways to work more closely with the community and to improve relationships between the criminal justice system and the citizens it served. It provided residents with more direct access to the prosecutor's office and the criminal justice system, and improved the effectiveness of the prosecutor's office in responding to the crime problems in the community.

The Cook County program appears to have been the first community-oriented prosecution program to geographically assign to community offices attorneys committed to spending a large proportion of their working day in community outreach, attending community meetings and problem-solving sessions with community groups. This unit provided educational presentations for the community, used vertical prosecution, and demonstrated a commitment to having unit attorneys handle cases of importance to the community in addition to acting as liaisons for the community in cases handled by the traditional case processing units.

Carey believed that consumer fraud was a particular problem for the community and, in 1973, established pilot offices staffed by consumer fraud attorneys assigned to take citizen complaints in the three Chicago neighborhoods of Northside, Westside, and Southside. The residents in each of these areas, however, asked instead for attorneys who could deal with other types of neighborhood crime problems. In 1974, Carey placed a second attorney in the Northside office, along with the consumer fraud attorney, to provide full felony and misdemeanor prosecution for cases that were significant to the community, initiating what was probably the first community prosecution program. On March 1, 1976, due to the success of the pilot program, the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission began funding the offices and, by May, supported four criminal attorneys, two at Northside and one at each of the other two offices, as well as three administrative assistants and four clerks. In 1977, one of the Northside attorneys was designated program supervisor but continued to work in the Northside office and a part-time fifth attorney was added to the Northside staff. By

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<sup>4</sup>Information on the Cook County program was obtained from Chicago, Cook County Criminal Justice Commission, 1978, Section V and from interviews with the Honorable Nancy S. Salyers, presiding Judge, Cook County Municipal Division, District 2, and Skokie and Ray Grossman, Esquire, both of whom were assistant state attorneys in Cook County assigned to the Community Prosecutions Unit between 1974 and 1983.

1978, a staff of four full-time attorneys, a program supervisor, and four clerks were needed to build on the success of the pilot effort.

As a harbinger of later community prosecution initiatives, Carey’s approach featured vertical prosecution of cases of particular concern to the communities served and a commitment to focus more closely on issues relating to the experience of crime victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system. In addition, the Chicago prototype featured close collaboration with community groups and other criminal justice agencies to maximize successful prosecution efforts. The Carey program also anticipated the community prosecution programs of the 1990s in its consideration of lesser criminal matters. Although 70 percent of the cases prosecuted by the community units involved felony charges, misdemeanor cases were also considered important because “the volume of misdemeanors in these high-crime communities demoralize and decay communities when left unattended” (Chicago, Cook County Criminal Justice Commission, 1978: V–11). Because each community office was able to handle only a small portion of the cases that came from its area, cases were pursued selectively, based on consideration by the program supervisor of their impact on the community. The selection was influenced by input from community groups on which types of cases would be most important to their neighborhoods and included cases related to gangs, drugs, arson, hate crimes, and crimes against elderly victims.

A brief evaluation of the Chicago community prosecution prototype drew on interviews with officials, community members, and police who served those districts (Chicago, Cook County Criminal Justice Commission, 1978: V–10). The response from community members was supportive, affirming that the community prosecution unit targeted cases that were important to each neighborhood, was responsive to referrals from residents, and aggressively prosecuted cases worthy of prosecution. The evaluation also reported that police characterized the efforts of the unit as productive. An analysis of case processing statistics in the evaluation indicated that felony cases handled by the unit resulted in a higher conviction rate (82 percent) than cases handled by the office in the traditional manner (57 percent) and that cases were dropped at a lower rate by the community prosecution unit (Chicago, Cook County Criminal Justice Commission, 1978: V–11). The report cited a “revival of neighborhood faith in the criminal justice system as a process that responds to community needs” resulting from Carey’s community-focused efforts (Chicago, Cook County Criminal Justice Commission, 1978:V–11). Interviews with community groups indicated that they felt that the community prosecutor was “their” attorney, representing their rights and interests in court.

According to the evaluation, the Chicago program used less experienced attorneys who rotated through the units for limited periods. This rotation inadvertently became a problem when neighborhood residents became attached to individual prosecutors whom they viewed as “their” lawyers. However, in recent interviews, two attorneys who were assigned to the unit in the 1970s indicated that, although they had had little previous experience when they were assigned, each stayed with the unit for at least 3 years, gaining

critical experience.<sup>5</sup> These former community prosecution attorneys described their close relationship with the community, which resulted in access to information about neighborhood crime problems and criminals which the office had never had before. The attorneys also found that having large groups of residents present in court for trials and sentencing hearings made a strong impression on judges. Such a showing alerted the judge to the strong feelings of the community about a particular criminal or crime.

Nonlawyer office administrators, who became adept at referring citizens to the appropriate agencies to obtain the assistance they required in noncriminal matters, performed an important problem-solving role for community members, much like the roles ascribed to community policing and community court staff in later community-oriented justice initiatives. The Community Prosecutions Unit also established a mediation unit to deal with community issues such as disputes between neighbors and between landlords and tenants to prevent them from escalating into criminal matters. When funding ran out, many of the functions of the unit were incorporated into the larger Cook County State Attorney's office, including an expanded victim/witness program, a unit focused on crimes against the elderly, and strong advocacy against hate crimes and support of hate crimes legislation.

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<sup>5</sup>The Honorable Nancy S. Salyers, presiding Judge, Cook County Municipal Division, District 2, Skokie and Ray Grossman, Esquire.



# Common Elements of Community Prosecution Strategies: A Working Typology

Since the early 1990s, principally fueled by the innovative efforts of Multnomah County, Oregon, District Attorney Michael Schruck, the adoption of community prosecution strategies has gained considerable momentum and now represents a movement for change in prosecution in the United States. In the same way that community policing reforms, drug courts, and community courts have grown in number and have become central features of the criminal justice landscape in jurisdictions of all descriptions and sizes, community prosecution has grown from a handful of programs to scores across the country.

Considering the forms that community prosecution has taken, it is evident that there is no one-size-fits-all model of community prosecution. Like other community justice innovations, community prosecution strategies have taken different forms in response to the needs and circumstances of specific localities, tailored to the problems of neighborhoods, commercial districts, or other geographic locations in urban and rural areas. Despite their diverse approaches, however, community prosecution strategies share some underlying dimensions.

Table 2 proposes seven critical dimensions focusing on common features that appear to define community prosecution strategies and provide a framework or working typology of community prosecution strategies. They include:

- The target problem bringing about the need for the community prosecution strategy.
- The geographic target area addressed by the initiative.
- The community's role in the community prosecution strategy.
- The content of the community prosecution approach to the community problems addressed.
- The organizational adaptations made by the prosecutor's office for community prosecution.
- Case processing adaptations.
- Interagency collaboration or partnerships that relate to community prosecution initiatives.

**Table 2: Critical Dimensions of Community Prosecution Strategies**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Target Problems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality-of-life offenses.</li> <li>• Drug crime.</li> <li>• Gang violence.</li> <li>• Violent crime.</li> <li>• Juvenile crime.</li> <li>• Truancy.</li> <li>• Prostitution.</li> <li>• Housing and environmental issues.</li> <li>• Landlord/tenant issues.</li> <li>• Failure of the justice system to address community needs.</li> <li>• Community alienation from the prosecutor and other justice agencies.</li> <li>• Improving community relations for better cooperation of victims/witnesses.</li> <li>• Improving intelligence gathering for traditional prosecution of serious cases.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2. Target Area</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban/inner city.</li> <li>• Rural/suburban.</li> <li>• Business districts.</li> <li>• Residential neighborhoods.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Role of the Community</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recipient of prosecutor services.</li> <li>• Advisory role.</li> <li>• Core participants in problem solving.</li> <li>• Core participants in implementation.</li> <li>• Community justice panels.</li> <li>• Sanctioning panels.</li> <li>• Ad hoc.</li> <li>• Targeted.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>4. Content of Response to Community Problems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating community self-help.</li> <li>• Crime prevention efforts.</li> <li>• Prosecution of cases of interest to the community.</li> <li>• Receiving noncriminal as well as criminal complaints.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>5. Organizational Adaptations/Emphasis in Prosecutor's Office</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field offices staffed by attorney(s).</li> <li>• Field offices staffed by nonattorney(s).</li> <li>• Attorneys assigned to neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Special unit or units.</li> <li>• Officewide organization around the community prosecution model.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>6. Case Processing Adaptations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vertical prosecution.</li> <li>• Horizontal prosecution.</li> <li>• Geographic prosecution.</li> <li>• Community prosecutors do not prosecute cases.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>7. Interagency and Collaborative Partnerships in Community Prosecution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Police.</li> <li>• City attorney.</li> <li>• Housing authority.</li> <li>• Community court/other court.</li> <li>• Other justice agencies (probation, pretrial services).</li> <li>• Other social service agencies.</li> <li>• Other regulatory agencies.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
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By focusing on the core ingredients of community prosecution strategies, this framework illustrates the shared structural elements of these initiatives and highlights significant variations as common elements are adapted to meet the needs of localities.

## Target Problems

Most community prosecution initiatives have been developed in response to crime problems that affect particular neighborhoods or otherwise defined geographic areas within a larger jurisdiction. Ideally, the problems targeted are those community members perceive to be the most detrimental to their sense of safety and well-being. Almost as a matter of principle, recent strategies have been designed from the start to address problems not normally the focus of prosecution. In most instances they involve quality-of-life or low-level offenses, constituting what Taylor (2000: 5) has recently termed social and physical incivilities that contribute to a sense of disorder and lack of safety in particular neighborhoods. The former may include acts such as loitering, street prostitution, public drinking, and public urination; the latter may include graffiti, trash, and abandoned and decaying properties.

Community prosecution programs differ in how they have identified their target problems. In some, the community has approached the prosecutor's office with issues for which they are seeking help. Such was the case in Multnomah County's pioneering community prosecution effort in 1990, when business leaders were concerned about the impact of low-level crime on the development of a downtown Portland business district. In other instances, the prosecutor's office has set its own agenda, often reflecting more traditional concerns with drug offenses or gang violence, but recognizing the value of community support and involvement in addressing them. The latter approach has sometimes encountered resistance when community members perceive their most pressing crime problems to involve less serious issues that nevertheless make life intolerable in a neighborhood.

This is what happened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1991, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office implemented the Local Intensive Narcotics Enforcement (LINE) program in an area of Southwest Philadelphia that was troubled by drug trafficking and drug-related violence.<sup>6</sup> The office sought the aid of the community to prosecute serious drug offenders. When assistant prosecutors began attending neighborhood meetings and talking to residents, they discovered that for residents the problems that contributed to the disorderly, unsafe, and blighted condition of their neighborhood were equally pressing. They wanted help in closing down nuisance bars and the convenience stores that sold malt liquor and were a focus of public drinking, public urination, street fights, and similar offenses. They wanted help with neglected properties that attracted drug activity and made the neighborhood unsafe and unattractive. The Philadelphia prosecutors found that by mobilizing city resources—such as the City Department of Licenses and Inspections and the Liquor Control Board—to address these issues they could simultaneously improve the

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<sup>6</sup>George G. Mosee, Deputy Chief of the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office Narcotics Division.

neighborhood and gain the cooperation of its residents in their original objective of fighting drug crime.

Washington, D.C.'s community prosecution program similarly began with the goal of more effectively prosecuting major drug offenders to stem the rising tide of violent crime in the District. These community prosecutors also found that, to more effectively meet this traditional prosecutorial goal, they had to gain the community's confidence and support. They did this by paying closer attention to the cases that were important to residents and soon were dealing with "tagging," nuisance properties, and other issues that affected the residents' quality of life.<sup>7</sup>

Community prosecution programs have been implemented to address a wide variety of target problems in an equally wide variety of settings. In Placer County, California, with an estimated population of more than 200,000 inhabitants, the district attorney's office created a community prosecution unit early in 2000. It focused primarily on elder abuse—crimes committed against individuals ages 65 or older—and crimes against dependent adults ages 18 to 64 involving the infliction of pain or mental suffering, endangerment of health, theft, or embezzlement of property.<sup>8</sup> Elder abuse was chosen as the target problem because of the county's large and growing elderly population and because elder abuse crime had increased over the past 5 years from about 12 cases per month in 1997 to about 40 new cases per month. As the county experiences growth in the number of nursing and assisted-living facilities as well as retirement communities, the prosecutor's office has identified elder abuse as a problem that had to be dealt with through a more effective, community-oriented approach.

Often, juvenile issues have emerged as important elements of the problems targeted by community prosecution. The crime prevention aspect of community prosecution is seen as particularly appropriate in dealing with youthful offenders and at-risk youth, and a large number of community prosecution programs focus on youth to prevent and respond to juvenile crime. Jurisdictions that devote substantial resources to juvenile issues include Middlesex, Suffolk, and Plymouth counties in Massachusetts; Howard County, Maryland; Denver, Colorado; Honolulu, Hawaii; Kalamazoo County, Michigan; Nassau County, New York; Brevard/Seminole County, Florida; Knox County, Tennessee; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; and Hennepin County, Minnesota.

Some of these initiatives have targeted the more serious problems associated with gang violence. In Middlesex County, Massachusetts, the district attorney's office administers the Community Based Justice (CBJ) program, implemented in 1991 to respond to violent juvenile gangs.<sup>9</sup> The CBJ task force is a collaborative effort that includes prosecutors,

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<sup>7</sup>*Community Prosecution Program in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia: Building Better Neighborhoods and Safer Communities* (January 2000), U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Columbia (Draft).

<sup>8</sup>Information is based on an interview with Assistant District Attorney Susan Gazzaniga, and Placer County's grant application proposal, "Planning a Partnership" (1999).

<sup>9</sup>Jacoby, 1995.

police, school and juvenile probation officials, and neighborhood leaders, who meet weekly at participating schools or police stations. The group identifies a priority prosecution list of violent juveniles to receive special attention, including graduated sanctions for those who continue to offend, and discusses children believed to be at risk of entering the juvenile system. The purpose and strength of the task force is that members share information from various perspectives about school-age offenders and children at risk, which allows informed decisions on interventions that take into account the behavior of the youth in various settings, including school and the neighborhood. The decisions of the task force on appropriate interventions or sanctions depend on the level of a child's involvement, and the ability of the school, parents, and other support systems to supervise and manage the youth's behavior. The prosecutor's office has about 50 attorneys who have been trained to work in the CBJ program. The program also has been adopted by Suffolk and Plymouth Counties.

In Los Angeles County, California, gang crime is a major problem and the focus of the community prosecution effort. The Los Angeles District Attorney's Office operates two programs with community-based orientations. The Community Law Enforcement and Recovery (CLEAR) program is a collaborative, community-based program in which the district attorney's office is mainly involved with targeted case processing. Prosecutors play a broader role in the Strategies Against Gang Environments (SAGE) program, which officials characterize as targeting gang violence, drug dealers, and other public nuisance problems that destroy neighborhood quality of life. Administered through the Hardcore Gang Unit of the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, SAGE started in the city of Norwalk with a gang injunction in 1993. In 1994, the program was given its name and has continued to evolve over time. Today, SAGE has five sites, with one assistant district attorney located at each, generally in a city-owned building such as a city hall or a police station. The sites are located in unincorporated cities outside the city of Los Angeles, but within the county. Here, the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office has jurisdiction over misdemeanor offenses in addition to the felony caseload it normally handles within the city of Los Angeles, where the city attorney has jurisdiction over misdemeanors. These cities pay most of the expenses for the programs in their locations. SAGE attorneys are primarily problem solvers and try cases only occasionally. One SAGE attorney works with the city attorney, focusing exclusively on gang injunctions wherever they are needed in the county.

SAGE uses civil injunctions to prohibit gangs from engaging in activities that create a public nuisance. For example, members of drug-dealing gangs are prohibited from carrying pagers or cell phones and congregating in public places. SAGE attorneys support trial prosecutors by providing them with intelligence about gangs and their members, helping law enforcement agencies with pre-filing issues, reviewing arrest reports, and evaluating problem cases. They also coordinate training for police on special issues, organize curfew sweeps, provide case law and training for judges on gang-related issues, coordinate information sharing among agencies, assist with information and training on the relocation of endangered witnesses, and help draft gang-related legislation. Projects include drug abatement; antiprostitution efforts; school truancy programs; legal education for elementary school children; and public nuisance projects (including researching and

drafting ordinances) that target issues such as public drinking and urination, gambling, and loitering, in addition to coordinating an antigraffiti project. The attorneys' community outreach efforts include preparing training materials about gang prevention, intervention, and suppression for community-based organizations, meeting with Community Police Advisory Boards to help develop community-based antigang strategies, and assisting with planning and training sessions regarding antigang measures that community members can use. Because the attorneys are stationed in the neighborhood, they can establish a rapport with the community and other criminal justice and social service agencies.<sup>10</sup>

Kalamazoo County's Neighborhood Prosecuting Attorney Program targets domestic violence, substance abuse, housing issues, and youth problems, working with schools, community organizations, and other government agencies to enhance community safety. All program goals are set by the neighborhood. One of the first projects identified the owners of deteriorating rental units in the neighborhood and enlisted the housing authority to handle the problem. Criminal prosecutions were also initiated and landlords were court ordered to sell the properties that they could not afford, or had no desire, to repair.

Youth issues revolved around truancy and curfew violations, with youth hanging out in the neighborhood drinking, using drugs, and making noise. A curfew/truancy program was created in 1999, known as the Center for Leadership Options for Community Kids (CLOCK) and operated through the Boys & Girls Club. Police cite young violators of state curfew laws and repeat truants, take them to the club, and contact their parents and/or teachers. The center operates a voluntary diversion program. Youth who refuse the program are referred to juvenile court. Program participants are assessed for personal, school, family, and employment issues, and are referred to appropriate agencies for help with these issues. Participants are taught leadership skills and provided with positive activities. Youth who stay out of trouble for a period of time are able to avoid formal involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Drugs and youth issues are the focus of the community prosecution strategy being implemented by the district attorney's office in Santa Fe, New Mexico. One of the problems the program seeks to address is a deeply entrenched drug trade that has involved some of the area's families for several generations. Another is a high level of heroin use. An important objective of the Santa Fe program will be to find recreational outlets for young people, whose quest for "something to do" frequently leads them into trouble.

One of the focal points of community prosecution in Honolulu, Hawaii, is a prostitution abatement program. In Waikiki, the tourism industry was suffering because of the prostitution problem. The prostitution abatement task force filed a nuisance abatement action to impose geographic restrictions against known prostitutes in the Waikiki district. Upon conviction, prostitutes are banned from the area as a condition of probation. The prosecutors also introduced legislation to prohibit prostitutes from the district, which was

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<sup>10</sup>Information is based on an interview with Assistant Head Deputy Nancy Lidamore, and on descriptions of the CLEAR and SAGE programs provided by the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office.

passed in 1998.<sup>11</sup> In addition, women who want to leave the profession can enter a 12-week prostitution intervention program. Free workshops are held on topics related to health, building self-esteem, and access to community resources.<sup>12</sup>

## Target Area

Another common feature of community prosecution strategies is that their target problems have a geographic component. Target areas, like target problems, may be identified through careful planning, needs analyses, and feasibility studies. They also may be self-selecting, such as when community residents or other stakeholders approach the prosecutor's office for help. How the target is configured geographically has important implications for the logistics of the initiative, such as how the community will be engaged, how the office will be organized, and how the objectives will be measured.

The nature of the target area—urban, suburban, rural, large city, or small city—may have important implications for both resource needs and the resources available to the community prosecution strategy. The challenges and logistical choices faced by community prosecution efforts targeting inner-city neighborhoods in large, densely populated urban areas may be quite different from those of smaller, rural, or suburban jurisdictions. With high levels of the serious crimes that are still the business of prosecutors' offices, the resources that can be dedicated to community prosecution may be limited and require careful definition of the target area.

Suburban and rural jurisdictions are facing many of the same problems that many community prosecution strategies have been designed to respond to in the inner city. These problems occur in commercial and residential neighborhoods and include both serious, often drug-related, crime and the less serious quality-of-life criminal matters.

The Santa Fe District Attorney's Office has targeted an area of more than 7,000 square miles with a permanent population of only about 125,000 residents (and the sizeable tourist population of Santa Fe). The area encompasses the primarily rural counties of Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and Rio Arriba, and includes several small towns. The town of Chimayó, straddling the Santa Fe-Rio Arriba county line, leads the nation in deaths from heroin overdose. According to Santa Fe District Attorney Henry Valdez, Chimayó is a rural community with city problems (Santa Fe and Rio Arriba together are designated a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area). Madrid, a small town south of Santa Fe, was an abandoned mining town that was repopulated and rebuilt in the 1960s to become a thriving community. Residents now find their quality of life declining because of growing drug use and violence. Although Santa Fe's community prosecution initiative faces target problems related to drugs and youth that are not so different from many urban programs, it faces the additional challenges of a rural setting. The large geographic area and the dispersed

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<sup>11</sup>Hawaii Revised Statutes, Section 712–1207.

<sup>12</sup>Information is based on an interview with Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Claire Merry and a report, "Special Report: Community Prosecution Program," Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, City and County of Honolulu (January 2000).

population make community outreach one of the greatest challenges faced by the program. Canvassing residents and getting them involved is literally a door-to-door effort. The involvement of three counties presents additional logistical issues, such as the inability of the various sheriffs' department vehicles to communicate with each other due to incompatible communications equipment.<sup>13</sup>

Sites also vary in their selection of business districts or residential neighborhoods, or a mix of both, as targeted areas for community prosecution strategies. In Kalamazoo County, Michigan, the first community prosecution site was in Edison, one of its oldest cities. The neighborhood has both residential and commercial zoning, with factories and businesses located near homes.<sup>14</sup> In Portland, Oregon, three of seven Neighborhood DA units serve areas that are primarily residential. The pilot Lloyd District is a mix of commercial and residential properties, and the West District is commercial. One unit serves Tri-Met, the Portland public transit system.<sup>15</sup>

The community prosecution program in Santa Clara, California, has three sites within its jurisdiction. One is located in the San Jose/Burbank area, which has a mixture of commercial and residential properties. Its population is primarily Hispanic, most of Mexican origin or descent, and long-time Caucasian residents. Its residents range from the very poor families who live in high-density, substandard housing with numerous code violations, such as open sewers and nonfunctional plumbing, to the very wealthy residents of Rosemont.

The target area presents some unusual challenges to the community prosecution effort. Approximately half of it, although located within the boundaries of San Jose/Burbank, is unincorporated, that is, not legally a part of the city of San Jose and therefore not governed by city ordinances and zoning regulations, nor subject to law enforcement by the city's police force. In addition, the unincorporated pockets of the San Jose/Burbank area have less access to services such as trash collection, and provision and maintenance of street and traffic lights. These areas have no parks, playgrounds, or other recreational areas. Teens hang out on the streets, many of which have no sidewalks and pose a safety hazard. The children who live in the unincorporated area attend a high school located several miles away, despite a "Blue Ribbon"-designated high school located in the center of their neighborhood but open only to city residents. The area also has a serious gang problem, which has resulted in numerous fights, assaults, and a homicide.

The unincorporated areas were farmland when the city was founded, and the residents did not want to be included in it. To this day, residents resist incorporation. They prefer to be left alone because they do not trust the city government and, specifically, the San Jose

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<sup>13</sup>Information was provided by District Attorney Henry Valdez, Program Coordinator Synthia Romero, and community leader Bruce Richardson at a BJA-sponsored workshop conducted by APRI for BJA community prosecution grant recipients in Washington, D.C., in February 2000, through presentations, discussions, and unpublished written materials.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Karen Hayter.

<sup>15</sup>*Neighborhood DA Unit Projects Update, March 1998*, [www.multnomah.lib.or.us/da/nbda.html](http://www.multnomah.lib.or.us/da/nbda.html).

police. The local sheriff's office polices these areas with officers from the neighborhood whom the residents have known for years. The office is far too small and ill-equipped to handle the gang activity, drug dealing, and prostitution that plague the area. With no zoning ordinances, commercial establishments such as liquor stores are located on residential streets, attracting teens, alcoholics, and drug dealers to the neighborhood. There are no ordinances to limit "red-light" types of establishments, such as strip clubs, many of which are on the main road that runs adjacent to residential housing and attract prostitutes and drug dealers.<sup>16</sup>

In Kalamazoo County, Michigan, residents were concerned about where the pilot community prosecution site would be located. The prosecutor held an open forum to invite community input into the targeting decision and presented comparative crime statistics to aid in making the decision. Subsequently, residents formed a neighborhood coalition to represent the residents' concerns. The coalition requested that the site be located in Edison, where 60 percent of residents rent their homes. It has a red-light district and one of the highest crime rates in the county. However, the community also had business and neighborhood associations, and it enjoyed a positive relationship with two community police officers assigned to the neighborhood. It gave the County Prosecuting Attorney's Office a solid foundation on which to build a relationship with the community.

In Multnomah County, Oregon, the business leaders of the Lloyd District in downtown Portland approached District Attorney Michael Shrunck about providing law enforcement support for this newly created commercial district. The district was struggling to attract customers in an environment plagued by quality-of-life crimes that were largely attributable to a nearby vacant area populated by transients. The area, known as Sullivan's Gulch, is public property adjacent to a highway that had become a haven for homeless people. "Residents" of the Gulch often wandered into the Lloyd District where they panhandled in an aggressive manner and urinated in public, frightening off prospective customers and threatening the efforts to create a new downtown area (Boland, 1996; 1998a: 259). The Lloyd District served as a pilot effort and a point of departure for similar service to other areas of Portland. Although the private funding (by the business community) of a county prosecutor to serve one neighborhood's special needs was viewed by critics as a "hired gun" approach to justice, other neighborhoods saw the positive impact and wanted their own neighborhood prosecutor (Boland, 1998a: 257).

The question of where to start can be complicated when competing locations are in great need, or when the best candidate area from a crime perspective offers little community support, interest, or infrastructure. Although an area is identified as critical from a citywide perspective, its involvement may not be viewed enthusiastically by the residents themselves, presenting the prosecutor's office with the added task of overcoming community resistance. This resistance may stem from a mistrust of public institutions in general and perhaps law enforcement and the justice system in particular. It may also reflect that some communities perceive being targeted as a problem area as stigmatizing or

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<sup>16</sup>Information is from an interview with Deputy District Attorney Christopher Arriola.

respond negatively to the term “community prosecution.” Therefore, some jurisdictions have chosen to use the term “community justice” rather than “community prosecution.”

Target areas may be delimited in various ways. In Washington, D.C., community prosecution zones were matched to police Patrol Service Areas, greatly enhancing the ability of community prosecutors to serve not only a particular neighborhood, but also to work effectively with the Metropolitan Police Department’s community policing teams within those service areas.<sup>17</sup> In other jurisdictions, such as Denver, community prosecution target areas are defined by neighborhoods, whose residents tend to share some ethnic and socioeconomic characteristics and are also likely to have a sense of community and common interest.<sup>18</sup> Multnomah County, Oregon, has Neighborhood District Attorney units linked to seven Portland districts variously defined. Some, like the East Portland District, comprise several neighborhoods. East Portland was originally served by the southeast Neighborhood District Attorney, but the area was too large to be served effectively. The Gresham District, a separate city within Multnomah County, is served by one unit, and the Tri-Met transit system district covers a three-county area with various law enforcement agencies.<sup>19</sup>

## **Role of the Community**

It is perhaps too obvious to state that community prosecution strategies are defined by their emphasis on, and the nature of their involvement with, the community. Kurki (2000: 257) takes the view that, although “community empowerment and participation” are a basic premise of other community justice initiatives, community prosecution initiatives have continued to take a fairly narrow, traditional view of the role of community members, limited to “giving information and providing extra eyes and ears.” Certainly, in many jurisdictions, enlisting the eyes and ears of the community to more effectively carry out the traditional business of the prosecutor’s office is seen as a benefit, if not an explicit goal, of community prosecution. Initiatives differ in the extent to which they “act upon” the community based on some assessment of problems and needs or “act with” the community in identifying problems and devising solutions to be carried out jointly. Prosecutors’ offices that are merely reorganizing how they assign cases on the basis of geographic area may have little contact with the community except to solicit information or testimony from community members in particular cases. Other community prosecution efforts, however, directly involve and collaborate with community members in a wide range of functions from problem identification to problem solving, as well as crime prevention and improvement efforts in the neighborhoods. Nevertheless, sites differ not only in how they define the role of the community but also in terms of who will become involved as representatives of the community.

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<sup>17</sup>*Community Prosecution Program in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia: Building Better Neighborhoods and Safer Communities* (January 2000), U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney’s Office, District of Columbia (draft).

<sup>18</sup>Based on site visits to two of Denver’s community prosecution sites, Capitol Hill and Globeville.

<sup>19</sup>*Neighborhood DA Unit Projects Update, March 1998*, [www.multnomah.lib.or.us/da/nbda.html](http://www.multnomah.lib.or.us/da/nbda.html).

In some jurisdictions, community activists play an important role in identifying problems and calling for effective responses, but the prosecutor's office largely orchestrates the response, often in conjunction with community police or other agencies. Prosecutors in the three New York City jurisdictions of Manhattan, Kings County, and the Bronx have created community affairs bureaus headed by nonattorney community organizers. These individuals do most of the community outreach. They attend community meetings and interact with residents, neighborhood leaders, and community stakeholders to determine the issues and priorities for law enforcement within their areas. They act as the link between the prosecutor's office and the community and facilitate a direct connection with prosecutors and other governmental agencies to address specific issues.

In other jurisdictions, the community plays a direct and critical role in assessing its problems and needs and in planning strategies for addressing those problems, with the assistance and resources that the prosecutor's office can bring to bear. Denver's strategy offers a dramatic example of central engagement of the community in its efforts.<sup>20</sup> The Denver District Attorney's Office does not have enforcement jurisdiction over the majority of quality-of-life crimes targeted by its Community Justice Unit; rather, the City Attorney's Office (renamed to shift the focus from prosecution and punishment to more comprehensive solutions) handles most of these cases. Nor does the Denver community prosecution program provide vertical prosecution for cases, in which community prosecutors follow cases through all stages of processing. Denver's effort instead focuses on citizen and community involvement to develop problem-solving strategies that are community driven. To achieve this, Denver's community prosecution attorneys primarily facilitate a process that involves neighborhood-based Community Justice Councils of individuals who have a stake in the community. There are currently two such councils, in the Globeville and Capitol Hill neighborhoods, each consisting of 20 to 35 members chosen by community prosecutors through indepth interviews.

The work of a Community Justice Council begins with identifying target problems. Council members list their concerns, which may be anything from stray dogs and inadequate street lighting to street corner drug dealing, and select the three issues that they consider to be of highest priority for the community. The councils meet on a monthly basis with community prosecutors and representatives of other relevant agencies to educate themselves and begin to craft and implement strategies to resolve these issues. Many are neighborhood quality-of-life issues that may, if addressed early, be prevented from escalating to criminal prosecutorial issues. The community prosecutors' role is to facilitate, provide legal expertise, and bring to bear the city and county resources that are at their disposal in a process that is largely carried out by and within the community.<sup>21</sup>

In still other jurisdictions, the prosecutor's office establishes neighborhood offices or assigns staff to the community and attends community meetings to become familiar with the neighborhood concerns. In Multnomah County, Oregon, the first Neighborhood

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<sup>20</sup>Observation based on site visits to Globeville and Capitol Hill.

<sup>21</sup>Description of the process is based on observation of a Capitol Hill Community Justice Council meeting and conversation with members and site officials.

District Attorney was stationed in the Lloyd District, where he was able to hear about what troubled neighborhood residents and experience the problems firsthand (Boland 1998a: 259). By contrast, community prosecutors in Kings County (Brooklyn), New York, are assigned geographically by police district but are stationed in the central office.

Community prosecution initiatives differ in their approaches to problem solving and the ways in which the community is represented in that process. In sites such as Multnomah County, prosecutors identify problems as they arise through their contacts with the community and attempt to craft solutions with the help of the community. Some problems may require long-term strategies, others can be fairly short-term efforts, and still others may be amenable to quick fixes but ultimately also require longer-term approaches.<sup>22</sup> The list of target problems is long and the solutions are varied, creative, and always collaborative. For example, in response to residents of neighborhoods plagued by open-air drug dealers, Neighborhood District Attorney Wayne Pearson worked with the city attorney to create Portland's drug-free zones. The Drug-Free Zone ordinance provides that anyone arrested for a drug offense within a drug-free zone may be prohibited from entering that zone for 90 days preconviction or up to 1 year postconviction, under threat of a criminal trespass charge. In an area of Southeast Portland, merchants complained of the problems caused by skateboarders—graffiti, litter, loitering, public urination, and unsafe riding. Rather than try to keep out the skateboarders, the Neighborhood District Attorney helped the merchants and skateboarders form a partnership with mutual rights and responsibilities that resulted in a public skateboarding park. Skateboarders enforce the rules on their peers and take responsibility for keeping the park clean. Merchants paid for signs and provided a place to store cleaning equipment. The city provided a toilet facility. Merchants and skateboarders now peacefully co-exist and business patrons appear to enjoy the performances.

In Denver, the approach of the community justice councils is to set as their agenda the three or four issues of highest priority to the community. Denver's organizers have determined that this is the best way to set manageable goals and be assured of some successes, which will sustain the process. The problem areas defined in this process may be broad and multifaceted, such as drug sales, crime related to alcohol abuse, and domestic violence (the actual target problems of Denver's Capitol Hill Council), and addressing them may require long-term strategies.

## **Content of Response to Community Problems**

Community prosecution initiatives differ in the response they deliver to the community, however they define the target problem and however they conceive the community role. In some locations, a principal response is to successfully prosecute cases that have been problematic for particular communities. These can include cases that involve certain drug dealers, bars where prostitution is centered and nuisance behavior often occurs, absentee landlords whose premises are used for crackhouses or by vagrants, or illegal vendors who

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<sup>22</sup>Based on information in *Neighborhood DA Unit Projects Update, March 1998*, from [www.multnomah.lib.or.us/da/nbda.html](http://www.multnomah.lib.or.us/da/nbda.html). See also Wolf, 2000.

disrupt access to legitimate enterprises. In Santa Clara, California, one of the Community Prosecution Unit's most visible achievements was a civil nuisance abatement suit brought by the district attorney against an adult movie theater on the main street in San Jose just around the corner from a residential area. Residents complained about prostitutes conducting business in the parking lot and alleys near their homes and finding used condoms and drug paraphernalia left by theater patrons. The suit accused businessowners of creating a public nuisance by permitting unlawful sex acts on the premises that carried over into the streets. Ultimately, the owners voluntarily closed the business after they were unable to correct serious building code violations within the deadlines set by code inspectors, who were partners in this effort. The media publicized the closing of the theater (*San Jose Mercury News*, March 23, 2000: 1B, 6B), and residents' response to the effort was extremely favorable. Similar suits have been filed against slumlords who rent substandard one-bedroom properties to poor residents at rates as high as \$1,500 per month. Because these residents cannot afford such rents, two or more families generally share one unit, which further exacerbates the problem. These properties are closed until the owner can prove that the necessary repairs have been made.<sup>23</sup>

In other instances, the community prosecution response involves establishing an empowerment process that centrally involves community residents in specific efforts to prevent crime or improve services. In Indianapolis, the Street Level Advocacy Program engages the community in problem-solving strategies. A problem identified by residents of one neighborhood was open prostitution. The Patronizing Diversion program was created to address this problem by targeting prostitutes' customers in an Eastern District business area. First-time offenders could avoid conviction by admitting that they had patronized a prostitute, doing community service, and participating in an impact panel. The panel consists of volunteers from the neighborhood, who are given the opportunity to confront the offenders and to air their feelings about the damage that prostitution does in their neighborhood. A community member helped design the program, which demonstrates to offenders that prostitution is not a victimless crime—it is the neighborhood that is victimized.

In Hennepin County, Minnesota, the community is drawn into both the identification of community problems and the sanctioning process in diversion programs in at least two of the sites. In the third precinct, a community council has been created, which includes local stakeholders and neighborhood representatives who provide insight into community concerns, encourage neighborhood participation in cases of community importance, and help decide where community work squad projects should be done. The fourth precinct uses restorative justice through sentencing circles for minor juvenile crime, allowing the community to have a say in sanctions meted out for juvenile offenders, and facilitating face-to-face meetings between victims and offenders.

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<sup>23</sup>Information was provided by Santa Clara County Deputy District Attorney Christopher Arriola.

## Organizational Adaptations in the Prosecutor's Office

Depending on the size and resources of the prosecutor's office, a community prosecution program may be run by one or two prosecutors, by lay employees, or by a unit containing many community-oriented prosecutors, investigators, community relations specialists, and clerical staff. Since 1997, in Pima County, Arizona,<sup>24</sup> one prosecutor has been assigned to address the problems in the community. A former civil attorney, she has created several programs using civil remedies, such as forfeiture and eviction procedures, to deal with nuisance properties, and has teamed up with local criminal justice agencies and citizens to identify problems and create legal strategies to deal with them. The prosecutor attends neighborhood association meetings and participates in Operation Spotlight, which teams the probation department, the community, local police, and the county attorney's office. The group meets once a week to discuss community issues and develop solutions, participate in team training sessions on problem-solving techniques, and share information. The prosecutor's involvement in officer training at the police academy helps solidify her relationship with the officers in the target area. Accompanying police on "ride-alongs" further facilitates her relationship with both the community and the police. Through these collaborative relationships and community outreach, one attorney has been working to have an impact on the quality-of-life issues in the community.

Many programs began with a single site operated by a single attorney or staff person and, after some initial success, they were able to expand. District Attorney Michael Schrunk started the Neighborhood DA program in Multnomah County, Portland, Oregon, in 1990 with a single prosecutor assigned to the Lloyd District. The pilot effort was so successful that a second neighborhood office was established the following year and others soon followed. By 1996, Portland had seven community prosecutors, with almost total coverage of the county (Boland, 1998a: 258).

In some locations, the community prosecution concept has served as a framework for organizing the prosecutor's office. District Attorney Charles J. Hynes started his community prosecution program in 1991 in Kings County (Brooklyn), New York. He divided the borough into five geographical zones based on police precincts, each zone encompassing four or five precincts, and assigned teams of attorneys to handle the cases that originated in each zone.

In both Howard and Montgomery Counties in Maryland, community prosecution has been implemented throughout the prosecutor's office. In these sites, community prosecution is a philosophy that governs the conduct of all business coming through the prosecutor's office rather than merely a single program or geographic reorganizational framework because of the impact the focus on specific community areas has had on overall operations. The reorganization of some prosecutors' offices according to geographic areas has often reflected a new perspective on the overall aims of prosecution and changes in the

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<sup>24</sup>Information on community prosecution in Pima County comes from an interview with Deputy County Attorney Christine Curtis and from the "Civil Remedies Outline 1999–2000," Pima County Attorney's Office.

perspectives of individual attorneys rather than just an organization of criminal caseload responsibilities. Howard County State's Attorney Marna McClendon institutionalized the community prosecution philosophy in her office by rewarding the successes of her community prosecution attorneys within the office. She makes it clear that the community prosecutor position is a valuable one. These attorneys are offered rewards and promotions when they complete a satisfactory period as community prosecutors. In addition, it is not assumed that office attorneys possess the skills to create effective relationships with the community. Individuals assigned to community prosecution are trained to reach out to the community and to deal with community issues. According to McClendon, they are not the least experienced prosecutors in the office. Community prosecutors must have enough experience to understand what the office has to offer the neighborhood and to be skilled in litigation.

## **Case Processing Adaptations to Community Prosecution**

Community prosecution programs may differ in the way they prosecute cases from targeted neighborhoods. Cases may be referred from neighborhood units to the central office for prosecution, or the neighborhood prosecutors themselves may prosecute them "vertically" (one prosecutor manages the case from beginning to end). In Kings County, New York, all attorneys are located in the central office to facilitate their ability to handle their trial caseload efficiently, even though the office caseload is divided into geographic zones that correspond to the organization of the court system. Geographic assignment is desirable in a community prosecution strategy because it allows trial assistants to become familiar with their assigned area, whereas random case assignment tends to isolate attorneys from the communities they serve. It is not practical in every jurisdiction, however, particularly in locations where the organization of the court system is incompatible. When court clerks control the assignment of cases to multiple criminal courtrooms on a random basis, it may not be possible to use geographic case assignment. If a prosecutor has no control over which cases are called in which courtrooms, a trial assistant may be assigned to cases in different courtrooms at the same time. Organizational strategies such as assigning trial teams to handle the cases in a certain courtroom without regard to their geographic origin may be the only efficient way to handle the caseload. Both Howard County, Maryland, and Denver, Colorado, cited this as the reason that their community prosecutors are geographically assigned to work with certain communities, but do not necessarily prosecute the cases that arise from them.

Community prosecution strategies also differ with regard to whether the prosecutor assigned to the community actually tries cases. In jurisdictions such as Multnomah County, Oregon, and Pima County, Arizona, the community prosecutors do not try cases themselves. Instead, cases are assigned to the trial division for litigation, with the community prosecutors acting as liaisons between the trial attorneys and the community residents. This leaves the attorneys free to immerse themselves in the community, participate in neighborhood meetings and affairs, and create responsive problem-solving strategies as their primary responsibility. At the opposite extreme, in other jurisdictions, the attorney assigned to the community carries the same caseload as any other attorney in

the office and must handle outreach and problem solving in addition to these responsibilities. Offices in Howard County, Maryland, Hennepin County, Minnesota, and Denver, Colorado, are structured in this manner. The majority of the jurisdictions noted in this report fall somewhere between these extremes, assigning to community prosecutors a reduced caseload of cases that are important to the community. The cases that these attorneys cannot handle are assigned to the trials division.

Community prosecutors who retain a significant caseload may find that they are overwhelmed by the demands of the position. The trial caseload requires a great deal of case preparation time during the day, and much of the community contact must be accomplished in the evening hours when neighborhood residents are not at work. Community meetings are almost always scheduled during the evening, so community prosecutors may find themselves working long hours and feeling as if there is not enough time to deal with the issues that are brought to their attention. Offices with smaller caseload demands or more financial resources may have the ability to relieve these attorneys of their case processing responsibilities so that they can devote all of their time to community outreach and problem solving. Offices with large caseloads or less financial backing may not have enough personnel to afford this luxury.

Vertical prosecution is a case processing strategy that has been adopted by many jurisdictions in their community prosecution efforts.<sup>25</sup> It appeals to the public because a single assistant prosecutor manages criminal cases from beginning to conclusion. The process is reassuring because of the belief that an attorney's familiarity with a case will translate into a greater commitment to achieving a successful conclusion. Theoretically, an attorney's interaction with community members and the knowledge that residents are closely following the progress of a case will increase the prosecutor's feeling of accountability. Some anecdotal evidence supports this perception. For example, Palm Beach County Prosecutor James Martz, who heads the Palm Beach Community-Based Anti-Crime Task Force, recounted that an assistant community prosecutor in West Palm Beach resigned after losing a case, because he felt that he had let down the residents of the community.<sup>26</sup>

In some offices, vertical prosecution is not practical because of limited resources and it is not viewed as an efficient use of attorneys' experience and talents. Later stages of prosecution require more experience and expertise than the initial filing of a case. Having a seasoned attorney handle all stages of prosecution, despite its intuitive appeal to observers, may not increase the probability of a successful result. In urban jurisdictions with large caseloads, vertical prosecution simply may not be feasible.

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<sup>25</sup>Vertical prosecution is part of community prosecution strategies employed in Manhattan and Kings County, New York; Middlesex and Suffolk Counties, Massachusetts; Los Angeles and Placer Counties, California; Howard and Montgomery Counties, Maryland; Washington, D.C.; Honolulu, Hawaii; Kalamazoo County, Michigan; West Palm Beach, Florida; St. Joseph's County, Indiana; Cuyahoga County, Ohio; and Sacramento and San Diego, California.

<sup>26</sup>This incident was related at an APRI/BJA community prosecution workshop in Washington, D.C., in February 2000.

## Interagency and Collaborative Partnerships in Community Prosecution

In most community prosecution jurisdictions, community problem-solving strategies involve initiatives that do not fall strictly within the prosecutor's domain or involve solutions that are only marginally related to criminal justice. Community prosecution programs differ in the degree to which they collaborate in multidisciplinary planning, enforcement, and service delivery strategies, and the extent to which they cooperate or are integrated with the related efforts of other agencies and community-focused initiatives such as community courts or community policing.

Travis County District Attorney Ronnie Earle has been the driving force in creating numerous community-based initiatives in Austin, Texas, including the community court and drug court programs, and programs focusing on preventing juvenile crime and truancy. He recently added a specific community prosecution program which takes an individual prosecutor directly out into the community. In Austin, representatives of various agencies that support the community justice initiatives interact cooperatively to accomplish the similar goals of various programs that draw the public into the business of crime prevention.

In many locations, community prosecution and community policing go hand in hand. They are encouraged by federal policy and funding to coexist and work collaboratively.<sup>27</sup> For community prosecutors, police support in their efforts provides the enforcement support and, at times, a measure of safety in situations that even a seasoned prosecutor is ill-equipped to handle. For community police, the prosecutor can provide the legal expertise and authority to bring creative policing solutions to fruition. In Multnomah County, police noted that before the advent of community prosecution they often failed to act on promising ideas because of uncertainty about their legality (Boland, 1998a: 275; Wolf, 2000: 1).

Depending on the target problems they have sought to address, community prosecutors have found it helpful and necessary to get other agencies involved in community initiatives, combining forces that community members would only access piecemeal. Community prosecutors have become creative in their reliance on the special roles of other agencies. For example, they may involve the civil justice system and housing and licensing agencies in nuisance abatement proceedings. Philadelphia's Local Intensive Narcotics Enforcement (LINE) program was implemented in 1991 as a pilot program in one Southwest Philadelphia police district that prosecuted serious drug offenders. When assistant district attorneys with the LINE program learned of the issues that really troubled community residents—nuisance bars, neglected properties, crackhouses, houses of prostitution, and “weed stores”—they called on other city agencies such as the police, the Bureau of Licenses and Inspections, the Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement, the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board, the Department of Public Health, the City Law

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<sup>27</sup>*The Clinton Administration's Law Enforcement Strategy: Combating Crime With Community Policing and Community Prosecution*, March 1999 ([www.usdoj.gov/dag/pubdoc/crimestrategy.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/dag/pubdoc/crimestrategy.htm)).

Department, and the Philadelphia Legislative Delegation to help address these issues and gain the cooperation of the residents. They found what other community prosecution efforts have also discovered, that nuisance abatement using civil remedies such as housing and licensing code enforcement can be effective in crime reduction.<sup>28</sup>

Some of the community prosecution initiatives are purely collaborative, functioning as part of a task force with other agencies. The CLEAR program in Los Angeles, California, which was created in 1996 by an interagency gang task force, is a collaboration of law enforcement agencies, public officials, and community residents that addresses the community's gang problems by targeting geographic areas or specific gangs, using suppression, intervention, and prevention tactics. The program was created by statute under Penal Code Section 14000, and includes five funded partners on the originating task force—the police, the sheriff's department, the district attorney's office, the city attorney's office, and the probation department. The CLEAR program is headed by an executive committee made up of representatives from these agencies, who meet monthly to set policy and make budget decisions. Each agency has a different role to play. Police and sheriffs take the lead in enforcement and intelligence gathering and make tactical decisions for certain enforcement programs. The district attorney is responsible for vertical prosecution of serious gang-related felonies, advising police on investigations when needed, handling probation violations, and providing input on community impact teams.

The CLEAR strategy is proactive, targeting the most active gang members and aggressively filing probation and parole violations and gang enhancements. The city attorney vertically prosecutes gang-related misdemeanors and uses nuisance abatement to address quality-of-life issues. Probation officers track members of targeted gangs who are on active probation to ensure compliance and ride along with police to arrest gang clients observed in violations. There is also a community impact team consisting of businessowners, residents, and stakeholders, who meet regularly with the team to share concerns and notify them about hotspots in their neighborhoods.

CLEAR operates in six sites throughout Los Angeles County. Prosecutors are located within the community, sometimes in space donated by local businesses. A city attorney is assigned to each office to handle quality-of-life misdemeanors. The goal is to locate all of the partners in one office space. The attorneys handle as many cases from their areas as they can, giving priority to serious felonies and cases that are of special significance to the community. Office trial teams covering that particular geographic area take cases that cannot be handled by these attorneys.

Denver's neighborhood Community Justice Councils, organized by the district attorney's office as part of that city's community prosecution initiative, often identify target problems that involve misdemeanor offenses that do not fall within the jurisdiction of the district attorney's office. Denver's program therefore not only brings the district attorney's

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<sup>28</sup>Information was provided by George G. Mosee, Jr., Deputy District Attorney and Chief of the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office Narcotics Unit, in an interview.

community prosecutors to the table but also calls on the city attorney to help neighborhoods craft solutions.<sup>29</sup>

Community prosecutors also collaborate with agencies that have civil or regulatory responsibilities to eliminate crime problems in particular neighborhoods. Operation Crackdown, a project of the U.S. Attorney's Community Prosecution Unit in the District of Columbia, involves the community in targeting absentee landlords whose property has become a public nuisance.<sup>30</sup> Private attorneys who donate their time pro bono are authorized to file lawsuits on behalf of established community or civic groups against landlords who own houses where illegal drug activity is occurring. District of Columbia Act 12-395 allows the U.S. Attorney, the District of Columbia's Corporation Council, or a community-based organization to file an action in D.C. Superior Court to enjoin, abate, or prevent a drug-related nuisance. The attorneys send out notices of potential lawsuits to the landlords. Landlords are forced to spend money on legal fees to respond to the notices, which undermines their motivation—their profit margin being cut—to look the other way when illegal activity takes place on their property.

The District's nuisance law is a potent weapon for community prosecutors against landlords and drug dealers because, unlike forfeiture actions, there is no legal defense. If there is a nuisance, the landlord is required to fix it. Because these types of cases are costly to defend, they almost never go to trial and are generally settled without a hearing.

As a remedy, the court can order the source of the nuisance to leave the property and never return. The attorney is not seeking money damages, but is instead seeking to force a more immediate response, such as eviction, or the issuance of a court order requiring that the landlord fix the problem. One of the District's cases addressed in this manner by the pro bono attorney was filed against a landlord whose property was abandoned. Instead of spending the significant amount of money needed to make the repairs, the landlord deeded the property over to the community group, which made the repairs and used the property as a community center.

The cause of action lies with the community or civic group. It can build up a record to support the nuisance action by keeping a log of the traffic in and out of the location, especially noting out-of-state license plates on cars owned by the individuals frequenting the location as indicative of drug sales. The action can be brought on behalf of "friends of the neighborhood" or in the name of the law firm to protect the identity of the residents involved. This deflects the anger of the subjects of the lawsuit over to the law firm, taking the pressure off the community. The individual affidavits that are the basis of the action are filed under seal until the hearing to protect the residents. Police also play an important role in building the record by supplying a history of the calls for service at the location and the

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<sup>29</sup>Based on observations and information presented at a Capitol Hill Community Justice Council meeting on April 11, 2000.

<sup>30</sup>*Community Prosecution Program in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia: Building Better Neighborhoods and Safer Communities*, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office (January 2000): p. 6. (Draft).

number of arrests that were made there. To have standing to bring the action, the community group, which need not be incorporated, must live in the affected area or within 8 to 10 blocks of it. After the statutory requirements of notice to the landlord have been met, he or she is presumed to have knowledge of the nuisance, and no additional proof is required of whether he or she knew or should have known of the drug-related nuisance. The burden of proof that the nuisance exists is a preponderance of the evidence. Although the U.S. Attorney is also authorized by statute to file suit against the landlord, the pro bono lawyer is focused on that particular property and can generally get the work done faster.<sup>31</sup>

In most jurisdictions, the prosecutor does not have primary responsibility for civil prosecutions. In Oakland, California, the city attorney has this responsibility and prosecutes drug nuisance actions, lawsuits against landlords who own substandard properties, and lawsuits against liquor stores and hotels that permit prostitution activities on their premises. The Oakland City Attorney's Office recently received a community prosecution implementation grant from BJA and that effort is in its early stages. The city attorney has long managed Oakland's Weed and Seed efforts and in that capacity has played a vital role in crime prevention strategies and developed a collaborative relationship with the Oakland police in several nuisance abatement programs. The city attorney drafted seizure and urban blight ordinances, which the Oakland Police Department enforces through its Beat Feet and Beat Health programs. Beat Feet implements a new ordinance that declares vehicles used to purchase narcotics or to solicit prostitutes to be a public nuisance and conducts reverse sting operations targeting drug buyers. Police undercover officers station themselves in high drug crime areas, "selling" marijuana and cocaine. The buyers are arrested and their automobiles are seized. The city attorney then files civil suits that result in either forfeiture of the vehicle by the owner or steep fines that the owner must pay to recover the vehicle. The Beat Feet operation is well publicized and drug buyers know that if they purchase drugs in Oakland they risk losing their vehicles.

The city attorney also acts as the civil prosecutor in actions that involve nuisance properties and has a unit within the police department that deals exclusively with these matters. A recent collaborative effort with the police department's Beat Health program resulted in the closing of a poorly maintained hotel within the community prosecution target neighborhood that was the site of both drug and prostitution activities.

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<sup>31</sup>Information based on a presentation by William Lawlor, Esquire, National Community Prosecution Conference, sponsored by APRI, September 25–27, 2000.

# Community Prosecution in the United States: Descriptive Overview of Sites

By mid-2001, the Crime and Justice Research Institute had identified and made contact with 36 prosecutors' offices that appeared to have community prosecution or community-oriented strategies in operation. (For a list of these sites, see table 1.) This section briefly highlights these programs in chronological order according to the date they were reported to have started operation.<sup>32</sup>

The description of these initiatives is meant to be inclusive and does not depend on a narrow definition of community prosecution. Some community prosecution advocates may argue that certain sites do not represent community prosecution initiatives according to some stricter understanding of the key ingredients of such strategies. We defer discussion of whether community prosecution is an umbrella concept for a broad variety of prosecutorial activities directed at crimes in the community or whether it has a narrower meaning denoting a new, collaborative, and problem-solving relationship with the community.

## Limitations of This Preliminary Overview

In presenting this descriptive information, we acknowledge and emphasize several limitations. First, this summary is illustrative and descriptive rather than "complete." We were not able to conduct a formal nationwide survey of all community prosecution sites. Because no one authority has a complete list of all community prosecution sites—with new programs being initiated at a rapid pace—we began with a more exploratory, preliminary investigation. We cannot be certain that we have identified all sites. It is likely that we missed some. We are confident that other sites have begun operation while this report was being produced.

We identified prosecutors' offices involved in what appeared to be community prosecution strategies from lists of grants awarded, available literature, participants and presentations at various conferences, and word of mouth among prosecutors involved in community-oriented innovation. After we identified candidate programs, we interviewed representatives to determine what sorts of community prosecution initiatives, if any, were under way. It was not feasible to visit or make firsthand observations of all 36 locations. Although firsthand observation is desirable and should be done in the near future, the descriptions presented in this report rely primarily on self-reported interview information from representatives of each site. Finally, the information we obtained through interviews is uneven. Some sites gave us a great deal of information, but we had more difficulty arranging full interviews in other sites. In some sites, the community prosecution

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<sup>32</sup>Please note that this discussion illustrates differences among community prosecution strategies on dimensions identified as critical to the working typology of the community prosecution sites just described.

initiatives had been in operation for years; in others, the initiatives were quite new and staff were still discovering implementation issues and solutions.

## **Purpose of the Preliminary Overview of Sites**

With these limitations in mind, we present a descriptive overview of community prosecution sites for two principal reasons. First, these summaries illustrate common ingredients of a diverse collection of community prosecution strategies and provide the fundamentals of a community prosecution model (hence the working typology described in chapter 4). Second, we offer this draft accounting of current community prosecution programs as a work in progress to solicit feedback and additional information from sites that have been included and others that have not.<sup>33</sup> With this input, we expect to develop a more complete description of community prosecution programs in the United States, whether they are in planning or operational stages.

## **Manhattan, New York**

In 1985, New York County District Attorney Robert Morgenthau created a Community Affairs Unit in his office to respond to the dramatic effects of the crack cocaine epidemic in Manhattan.<sup>34</sup> The unit was originally established to improve relations with the community and to facilitate collaboration on problem-solving strategies with other government agencies. The office is now staffed by 10 nonattorney community affairs associates who work with citizens and community groups in designated geographic areas that overlap with Manhattan's 22 police precincts, and who focus on drug crime, nuisance properties, and low-level quality-of-life offenses. Associates attend community board and police precinct meetings to become aware of neighborhood complaints and issues, and network with community police officers to help fashion alternative legal responses to the traditional arrest/conviction track. A community-oriented information system is used to manage information received from the community and other sources, track contacts made, and detect crime patterns.

The Community Affairs Unit provides a steady flow of information between the community and the trials division, where attorneys with various levels of experience are assigned to six general trial bureaus, each with attorneys who specialize in specific major crimes. Cases are assigned to trial bureaus on a random basis or by crime type to specific prosecutors. Morgenthau's approach is premised on the belief that nonattorney personnel who are trained to perform outreach and respond in a timely fashion to community requests are able to address community needs more efficiently. Unit attorneys become involved when legal expertise, investigation, or litigation skills are needed to handle

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<sup>33</sup>Please contact Cheryl Irons-Guynn at the Crime and Justice Research Institute at [cheri.ironsguynn@cjri.com](mailto:cheri.ironsguynn@cjri.com) to provide comments or additional information.

<sup>34</sup>Information on the Manhattan Community Affairs Unit was obtained from interviews with Executive District Attorney Kristine Hamann and Community Affairs Unit Director Connie Cuchierra; "Building Partnerships Among Communities, Police and Prosecutors," New York County District Attorney's Office, September, 1993; and Boland, 1998b.

community problems. The attorneys also give talks to community groups and teach classes in the schools on criminal justice issues. Unit officials estimate that half of the community problems they deal with can best be handled through means other than litigation, often by drawing on other government agencies or social services. By design, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office assigns attorneys with specific expertise as problems require. This approach gives the office more flexibility in devising appropriate responses to community crime issues than if one attorney with generalized skills were assigned as community prosecutor to a specific geographic area to handle all types of problems. Once the attorneys are involved, the unit employs vertical prosecution, allowing attorneys to become sufficiently familiar with the neighborhood from which the case originates, its issues, and the witnesses and victims involved. Another rationale for the approach is that attorneys are insulated from the ethical issues that arise if they are too closely tied to the community. This strategy prevents residents from viewing the attorneys as "their lawyers" with expectations of free legal advice. In addition, residents are less apt to inadvertently volunteer incriminating or inappropriate information and place an attorney in a position of conflict if a community resident must be charged with a crime.

Two programs have been created in association with the Community Affairs Unit to respond to specific types of community crime issues—the Trespass Affidavit Program and Project Focus. With collaboration from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Trespass Affidavit Program targets landlords of apartment buildings that have been taken over by drug dealers. The buildings are posted with "No Trespassing" signs and landlords supply police with building keys and current tenant lists, so that patrolling officers can ascertain who belongs in the buildings and arrest loiterers (drug buyers) for trespass. Project Focus trial assistants proactively focus in an area of the 34th police precinct because of its large volume of violent crime and drug activity. Prosecutors are assigned to areas corresponding to community police officers' beats.

Project Focus prosecutors use information gathered from the community, local police, and the Community Affairs Unit to identify the area's crime patterns and active criminals and to design a plan to address them, often employing civil remedies as well as traditional prosecution. This program has been replicated as Project Octopus on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in an area with a large concentration of public housing. Project Octopus attorneys work with the housing authority police. The targeted crime problems extend beyond more than one police beat so the attorneys are not limited by beat boundaries and are deployed on the basis of the crime problems.

## **Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon**

Multnomah County District Attorney Michael Schrunk initiated the Neighborhood DA program in 1990, in Portland's Lloyd District, in response to requests from business leaders who were trying to develop the area as a center of commerce and were concerned

about the impact of low-level crimes.<sup>35</sup> In an unusual arrangement, the business leaders offered to pay the salary of the first neighborhood prosecutor and to provide office space. Schrunk agreed to the initiative as a pilot effort, further agreeing to fund its expansion to other neighborhoods if it was successful. A newspaper article that criticized the office for allowing the “rich” to “buy” the services of a prosecutor led to calls from other Portland neighborhoods that wanted their own Neighborhood DAs, rather than to public outrage. Since then, the program has expanded to cover the entire county, with seven Neighborhood DAs (NDAs) funded mostly by public money. The additional sites include various settings and present different types of problems. They include the primarily residential areas of North-Northeast and Southeast Portland; the East District, which was split from the Southeast District because it was too large for one NDA to handle; Gresham, a city in Multnomah County but separate from Portland; the West District downtown business area; and the Tri-Met District which encompasses the local transit system. Partners include the community police, who predate the community prosecution program, the community courts, the city attorney’s office, state and local social service and other noncriminal justice agencies, the FBI, and the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

NDAs maintain offices in their assigned neighborhoods. Through collaboration with local police and neighborhood groups, NDAs become aware of problems and seek innovative solutions to them. An important part of the process is empowering residents to help in the problem-solving effort. They can provide information needed to get a search warrant for a property where drug dealing is suspected, or help keep watch on an area that has been the subject of an intervention to ensure that the problem does not recur. Often, the NDA’s role is to provide the legal expertise needed to activate a plan proposed by residents or the community police.

NDAs generally do not screen cases and rarely prosecute them. Their primary obligation is to be available to the community, the police, and governmental agencies as a resource, and time spent in court would take them away from the community. However, attorneys in the West and Lloyd Districts do some screening and carry small caseloads. No official policy has been set by the office; each site has been allowed to evolve as the assigned attorney saw fit. NDAs do, however, handle cases that are heard in Portland’s three community courts, which are plea courts with jurisdiction over misdemeanors. Felony cases originating from community prosecution sites are assigned by crime type to the felony trial unit, where they are vertically prosecuted. Misdemeanor cases that are not heard in community court are randomly assigned to the misdemeanor unit, where only domestic violence and cases of special significance are prosecuted vertically. NDAs help investigating police officers prepare their cases, and assist felony trial attorneys with grand jury presentations and trial preparation by facilitating interaction with witnesses and obtaining case-related intelligence from the community.

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<sup>35</sup>Information relating to Portland’s Neighborhood DA program was obtained from interviews and discussions with former Deputy District Attorney Michael Kuykendall, now a Senior Attorney at APRI, and Deputy District Attorney James Hayden; from Boland, 1996, 1998, and Wolf, 2000; and the Multnomah County District Attorney’s Office web site.

The first important NDA project involved cleaning up Sullivan's Gulch, the area adjacent to the Lloyd District where homeless people and transients routinely camped. The area was littered with trash, and its vagrants wandered into the downtown area, broke into cars, urinated in public places, panhandled aggressively, and generally engaged in behavior that drove away business. No concerted effort to eliminate the problem had ever been made, and annual cleanup costs exceeded \$40,000. The solution came when the NDA got the residents and affected businessowners to patrol the gulch, post signs against trespassers, pick up trash, and remove and store property left behind at a location far from the gulch. Within a year, the gulch became a clean stretch of parkland.

Another innovative response to a neighborhood problem resulted in the first drug-free zone in 1992. Certain Portland neighborhoods had problems with drug dealers selling on their streets. Because jails were overcrowded, arrested dealers were quickly released and returned to the area. The district attorney, working with the city attorney, crafted an ordinance to create drug-free zones in areas of high-volume drug dealing. To have an area designated as a drug-free zone, a statistical showing must be made that the area generates substantially more drug arrests than other comparable areas. Consequently, the zones are primarily located in the two community prosecution sites where drug activity has been inordinately high.

If a person is arrested for the sale or possession of drugs in a drug-free zone, the police can issue a 90-day notice of exclusion from the zone. If the person enters the zone within that period, for reasons other than to travel between specific destinations such as home and work or school, he or she can be arrested for criminal trespass. These cases are heard in community court, and the offender is mandated to perform community service in the neighborhood where he was arrested, providing the community with visible proof that something is being done about the community's problems. Once arrested and released on bail, dealers are no longer free to resume business as usual, which drastically decreases drug sales in the areas.

NDA's consider the community courts, the first of which opened in 1998, one of their most important tools. An NDA from each community appears in court to handle neighborhood cases at least once a week. The court handles the majority of the misdemeanor quality-of-life offenses that arise from the community in an expedited fashion. Offenders agree to enter a plea to the charges and receive nonjail sanctions that include community service to be performed in the neighborhood where they committed the offense. Each defendant is assessed to determine what, if any, social services are needed, and may be mandated to receive those services or complete a program as a part of the sentence. Most first-time offenders are eligible to have their charges dismissed upon satisfactory completion of their sentence. (Offenders brought in for domestic violence, assaults, and misdemeanors that involve firearms or injury to victims are not eligible for dismissal of their charges.) Failure to complete the sentence results in a 3-day jail sentence. Repeat offenders receive increased community service hours and are not eligible for dismissal of the charges. In addition to disposing misdemeanor cases, the community court also handles violations of drug-free zone restrictions, which are charged as misdemeanor criminal trespass.

The community courts are used by NDAs in another significant way. In Multnomah County, the prosecutor has jurisdiction over code violations, which can be charged as misdemeanors. In addition to citing landlords with code violations for failing to maintain their properties, actions that are likely to be ignored, these landlords may be charged with misdemeanor offenses and required to appear in community court. This arrangement has several benefits. Violators cannot overlook the criminal matter as easily as a civil citation, the hearing is expedited and requires a quick response, and the community can see that the landlord is being made to answer for the violation by performing community service and making repairs to the property. Neighborhood prosecutors continue to seek novel ways to use this power over code violations in community court.

### **Kings County (Brooklyn), New York**

Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes started the community prosecution program in 1991 to address neighborhood quality-of-life and public safety issues in Brooklyn.<sup>36</sup> He assigned teams of attorneys to the borough's five judicial zones, each consisting of four to five police precincts, to handle the cases that originated there. The aim of this arrangement was to ensure that attorneys would become familiar with the community to which they were assigned and the types of crime that occurred there. At the same time, the community attorneys could develop a working relationship with the community and the precinct police to address public safety goals of principal concern to the community and to encourage neighborhood support in the prosecution of criminal cases. The attorneys met regularly with residents and listened to their concerns about crime and quality-of-life issues. An underlying rationale of the program was that prosecutorial assignments corresponding to the same geographic zones as the courts and grand juries would make judges more aware of community concerns, by dealing with community prosecutors in the courtroom on a daily basis.

Attorneys assigned to each zone are located in the central office rather than in neighborhood offices. Because the office serves 2.5 million people spread out over 70 square miles and prosecutes approximately 85,000 felony and misdemeanor cases each year with a staff of more than 500 attorneys, field offices are not seen as the most cost-effective deployment of legal staff. It is felt that the zone attorneys spend sufficient time in their assigned neighborhoods to obviate a full-time presence. Felony cases are prosecuted vertically from grand jury indictment through disposition. Misdemeanors are prosecuted vertically from arraignment through disposition.

In addition to assigning attorneys to zones, Hynes created a Community Relations Bureau with seven nonattorney personnel and a supervisor who are responsible for community outreach on behalf of the attorneys. These individuals are each assigned to an area that includes four police precincts and three community relations boards (community groups that represent more than one police precinct and include representative community members and stakeholders). They too are located in the central office. For logistical reasons, their assigned areas do not necessarily correspond to the zones the attorneys

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<sup>36</sup>Boland, 1996 and 1998; Wolf, 2000.

cover. Meeting times and days may make it impossible to cover all meetings located within a zone, some community boards represent precincts that are not within the same zone, and specific skills such as proficiency in Spanish may make some staff more suitable representatives in certain communities. Although zone supervisors attend community meetings and police precinct councils, each staff person is responsible for knowing area leaders and stakeholders, attending community meetings, keeping track of the problems and issues that arise at the meetings, and communicating problems and information to the appropriate zone attorneys or agency. An information log on community contacts is maintained on a computer, but planning is under way for a more sophisticated information system that will flag information for the appropriate users so that it can be transmitted to the attorneys more quickly and efficiently.

The office operates several legal education programs. Programs include Legal Lives, which assigns attorneys to specific schools to teach fifth graders about the law; The People's Law School, which provides information for adult residents about the criminal justice system and how to handle specific problems in their neighborhood; and an afterschool youth law school that provides older children with legal information relevant to them. The Formal Trespass Affidavit Program is similar to the New York County program; it targets apartment buildings where criminal activities take place and engages landlords in monitoring these activities.

Community partners include community police and the Red Hook Community Court, which has jurisdiction over a small portion of Brooklyn (three police precincts) that falls within three different attorney zones. A single attorney handles all community court cases.

## **Middlesex County, Massachusetts**

The Community-Based Justice Program (CBJ) was created by Middlesex County District Attorney Martha Coakley in 1991 to respond to violent juvenile gangs.<sup>37</sup> The Middlesex County District Attorney's Office has a core staff of about 50 attorneys who are directly involved in the CBJ program, which has been implemented in all 54 cities and towns in the county. In addition to their work with the program, CBJ attorneys carry a regular criminal caseload, which includes both adult and juvenile cases. (The county has no separate juvenile court facility; rather, each court sets aside days to handle juvenile cases.) The entire office, including CBJ, is organized geographically, with three trial teams assigned to different regions. (Exceptions to this organization are specialized divisions that handle child abuse, white-collar crime, and domestic violence cases wherever they occur.) CBJ cases are prosecuted vertically.

The target of the CBJ program is high school students who have been charged with delinquent or criminal offenses. Although juvenile jurisdiction ends at age 17 in Massachusetts, many youth are still in high school at that age so offenders targeted by CBJ

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<sup>37</sup>Information on the Middlesex County Community-Based Justice Program was obtained from an interview with Assistant District Attorney Kerry Ahearn and from *Community Based Justice, No Time to Wait, No Time to Waste*, Middlesex District Attorney's Office (1994); and Jacoby, 1995.

are not necessarily juveniles. CBJ task forces include prosecutors, police officers, school officials, juvenile probation officials, and, in some cases, neighborhood leaders. They meet weekly to share information about these youthful offenders. Prosecutors are better prepared to handle and dispose of their cases in an appropriate manner because they have access to information about the background and behavior of youth in the community and in school. CBJ maintains a priority prosecution list, with graduated sanctions imposed on those who continue to offend. It includes violent juveniles who are then singled out for special attention. The list identifies approximately 1,700 juveniles who are monitored on a regular basis and is updated to include current information and to identify new youth who need intervention. Efforts are made to avoid removing the offenders from the community. In appropriate cases, both the youth and the family are given support through social services and creative probationary terms. A major emphasis of the program is the sharing of information among committee members about youth in trouble or at risk of becoming involved in serious crime. Without shared information, none of the agencies involved would know how serious the youth's issues were in time to intervene and perhaps constructively deal with the problems.

## **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office Public Nuisance Task Force<sup>38</sup> was created by District Attorney Lynne Abraham in 1992 and assumed the role of an earlier community-oriented prosecution effort, the Local Intensive Narcotics Enforcement program, which was implemented in 1991 by former District Attorney Edward Rendell in Philadelphia's 18th Police District. The LINE program was an effort by the District Attorney's Office Narcotics Division to enlist the help of neighborhoods in prosecuting serious drug offenders, identified by the office as a high-priority issue for that area. Discussions with area residents convinced the prosecutors that problems with nuisance properties were a higher priority.

When funding ended for the LINE program, the Narcotics Division continued nuisance abatement efforts under the Public Nuisance Task Force, a program created to engage the community in efforts to close crackhouses, nuisance bars, houses of prostitution, and "weed stores." The Public Nuisance Task Force program primarily targets nuisance properties related to drug and alcohol violations. Six attorneys are assigned to geographic areas coinciding with detective divisions. The attorneys are based in the main office, but spend much of their time in the community and are required to attend community meetings to gather information from residents about problem properties. The Public Nuisance Task Force attorneys try some criminal cases and litigate civil cases, including property forfeitures. The Narcotics Division prosecutes the more serious and complex cases, using vertical prosecution. The unit also assists the community in becoming more organized, by

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<sup>38</sup>Information on Philadelphia's Public Nuisance Task Force is from an interview with George G. Mosee, Jr., Deputy District Attorney and Chief of the Narcotics Division, Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, and from *Community Guide to Drug and Alcohol Related Nuisance Enforcement: Public Nuisance Task Force*, published by the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. The Juvenile Division also engages in some community prosecution efforts, including a truancy program.

helping residents form groups such as Communities That Care and training interested citizens to lead them.

The Public Nuisance Task Force operates in collaboration with other city agencies, such as the Philadelphia Police Department, the Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement, the Liquor Control Board, the Philadelphia Health Department, the Department of Licenses and Inspections, the City Law Department, and the Philadelphia Legislative Delegation. They work closely with community police and the Narcotics Enforcement Team, a decentralized division of the police department that handles cases geographically.

The nuisance abatement process begins with a complaint initiated by citizens. The assistant district attorney assigned to the region generating the complaint sends a warning letter informing the property owner that a violation of the drug act has occurred on the property and that it could be seized and sealed. An investigation of the property is conducted, which may include any or all of the partner agencies mentioned above. The assistant prosecutor then seeks to abate the nuisance through civil injunction, asset forfeiture, condemnation of the property, or negotiation with the owner. Community residents are kept apprised of the progress of the case and may give information or testimony about the property.

The Public Nuisance Task Force relies primarily on three pieces of legislation to address nuisance properties:

- The Nuisance Drug Law, 42 PaCSA, Sections 8381–8392 (1992), authorizes the district attorney’s office, the city solicitor, a resident living within 1,000 feet of the nuisance property, or a community-based organization to go to Common Pleas Court to stop drug-related nuisances taking place on any property where drugs are regularly used or sold. The court may seal the property at the owner’s expense, order repairs, revoke licenses, force the owner to pay damages and civil penalties of up to \$10,000 and court costs incurred by the community, or order the premises secured.
- The Pennsylvania Liquor Code, Section 6-611, states that any licensed liquor establishment that serves minors, drunks, known alcoholics, known criminals, persons of known intemperate habits, or otherwise violates the code is a public nuisance. Unreasonable conduct that is disruptive to community life, such as littering, violence, or noise pollution, also creates a public nuisance. The district attorney’s office is authorized to join neighborhood groups in making a request to have the court close down such an establishment.
- Philadelphia Code, Sections 19-2600–2602, empowers the district attorney to join neighbors in requesting the court to close down establishments that unreasonably interfere with the public rights of three or more people through any illegal activity.

The Task Force has a hotline number, so citizens can reach them easily. Much of the funding for the unit comes from revenue generated through forfeiture proceedings.

## Marion County (Indianapolis), Indiana

The Marion County Prosecuting Attorney's Office began planning for the Street Level Advocacy Program in 1993, and the effort was expanded when Scott Newman took office as Marion County Prosecutor, in 1995.<sup>39</sup> Currently, one part-time and five full-time deputy prosecutors, assisted by four full-time paralegals, are assigned to the program. They work directly with all five Marion County police departments and the surrounding suburbs. The effort has resulted in significant improvements in the working relationship between police and prosecutors, who previously had blamed each other for cases that "fell through the cracks." Street Level Advocates (SLAs) screen and file all felony cases presented by police officers from their districts except drug, homicide, and sex crime cases, which are handled by special divisions. SLAs select four or five cases to prosecute personally that are of particular importance to the local community, and provide assistance to police on legal issues 24 hours a day. They also update officers on new developments in criminal law. The program includes a full-time nuisance abatement coordinator and an assistant investigator. Marion County's approach emphasizes information sharing and improved communication among criminal justice agencies and the community. It employs a combination of vertical prosecution and strategies to prevent crime in the neighborhoods.

SLAs attend community meetings and help organize community events. The prosecutor's staff believe that direct contact with the community has facilitated a more positive relationship between residents and the prosecutor's office, resulting in greater community involvement in, and support of, prosecutor-led initiatives. Community residents help set the agenda for SLA initiatives by identifying issues of highest priority. One program created in response to community input is the Patronizing Diversion Program, which targets customers of prostitutes in an Eastern District business area. First-time offenders can avoid conviction if they admit to the charge, perform community service, and participate in an impact panel during which neighborhood residents can air their feelings to the offenders about the damage that prostitution does in their neighborhood.

Other Street Level Advocacy efforts include:

- *The Nuisance Abatement/Narcotics Eviction Program:* Police or residents identify and target properties used in drug or other illegal activities. Landlords are assisted in abatement efforts and, failing this, are assisted in evicting tenants who have been involved in documented criminal activity. Collaborative efforts involving various agencies, including city council and municipal services, as well as code inspectors from the fire, zoning, and health departments, can result in heavy fines to offending property owners, as well as eviction of problem tenants. Multiagency sweeps, targeting properties that have been the source of community complaints, are conducted every 2 months.

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<sup>39</sup>Information on the Marion County Street Level Advocacy Program is from interviews with Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Diana Burleson and Catherine Coles, J.D., Ph.D.; Wolf, 2000; and *Marion County Prosecutor's Office, Street Level Advocacy Unit*, Marion County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (January 12, 2000).

- *Case Watch*: SLAs notify trial attorneys of cases that must be watched and track cases of importance to the community. Community residents are alerted to watch for the return of defendants with stay-away orders so that police can enforce these orders.
- *Curfew Sweeps*: The idea behind curfew sweeps is to reduce crime by reducing the presence of unsupervised youth in public areas after certain hours. In response to community input, SLAs coordinate these sweeps in cooperation with juvenile probation officers and the police.

As a result of the improved relationship between the prosecutor's office and the community, citizens have become more confident about reporting criminal activity and take a more active role in developing solutions to crime-related problems. The prosecutor's office has also led the development of a community justice center and a community court, which will handle misdemeanors, quality-of-life crimes, and health and housing code and ordinance violations. The community court will impose sanctions and provide services that focus on the offender's problems and community restoration.

## **Suffolk County (Boston), Massachusetts**

The community prosecution strategy of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office involves three major components: the Safe Neighborhood Initiative (SNI), Prosecutors in Police Stations (PIP), and Community Based Justice (CBJ).<sup>40</sup> Each of these programs represents a proactive prosecutorial effort to address crime problems on a community level.

### **Safe Neighborhood Initiative**

Suffolk County District Attorney Ralph Martin created the first SNI in Dorchester in February 1993. Since then, the program has been expanded to include three additional inner-city neighborhoods—East Boston, Chelsea, and Grove Hall—to enhance public safety in these high crime areas. SNIs began as a partnership among community residents, the Attorney General of Massachusetts, the Suffolk County District Attorney, the police, and the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, based on the belief that a collaborative effort among these agencies was necessary to have an impact on escalating violence. District courts in Boston were already decentralized, giving judges the opportunity to become familiar with the neighborhoods in the areas they served. The organization of the district courts provided a practical basis for assigning community prosecutors geographically. At least one prosecutor and one assistant attorney general (who is empowered to try cases on behalf of the district attorney) are assigned to each SNI to handle cases arising from that area and bring neighborhood concerns before the bench. SNI staff have access to office space in these locations. The attorneys attend all SNI meetings, screen and prosecute cases, and work closely with police. They also network with residents and attend community meetings to stay familiar with community crime problems. In

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<sup>40</sup>Information about Suffolk County is from Deborah McDonnah, who heads Community Affairs, and Coles, 1997, Appendix B.

addition, one nonattorney staff person is assigned to each SNI to coordinate activities and handle projects that do not involve law enforcement. Selected area residents and stakeholders sit on an advisory board that meets with SNI officials to identify local issues and, in some cases, participate in creating strategies to address those issues. In East Boston, for example, residents identified underage drinking and the local liquor stores supplying alcohol to minors as important quality-of-life problems. SNI staff sent letters notifying the merchants of the new zero tolerance policy for supplying minors with alcohol. This notice was followed a month later by a reverse sting operation and a subsequent meeting with the merchants to ensure that they were aware of what was required of them.

### **Prosecutors in Police Stations**

The Suffolk County community prosecution strategy also places prosecutors in police stations (PIPs). PIPs are assigned to the three busiest police stations to work directly with officers, screening incoming cases, reviewing applications for search warrants, and providing legal assistance for the police when needed. PIPs also target and prosecute high-profile community interest cases, including felonies. PIPs often work nights, riding along with police in targeted areas. Because these attorneys are often out in the community, they develop relationships with residents, become familiar with community issues and problems, and develop a better working relationship with the police. PIP attorneys are directly involved in the investigation of cases before arrests are made. They sometimes use a “John Doe Grand Jury” to encourage cooperation from otherwise uncooperative witnesses and victims. A John Doe Grand Jury may be convened to investigate a serious case before an alleged offender has been identified, and the witness or victim is subpoenaed to appear and testify. Witnesses or victims who fail to cooperate may be cited for contempt. This tool often enables the prosecutor to obtain information about a crime to which the police might not have access. PIP staff also ensure that the witness or victim is provided with services, such as compensation for injuries. This care facilitates a relationship of trust with the witness or victim early on in the case. Cases not handled by SNI or PIP attorneys are assigned to the trials division.

### **Community Based Justice Task Force**

The third major component of the Suffolk County community prosecution strategy is the Community Based Justice Task Force, which was adapted from the first such program in Middlesex County. CBJs have been implemented in many Suffolk County schools, where they provide a forum for community-level information sharing among officials dealing with court-involved and at-risk youth.

A nonattorney employee heads the district attorney’s Community Affairs Unit, which develops and implements programs to respond to community issues. This individual interacts with the community and creates linkages with government agencies and social service providers to bring together potential problem solvers to develop innovative solutions to problems. The unit was developed to prosecute cases of domestic violence, elder abuse, and child abuse and uses a holistic approach to support and prepare victims in these sensitive criminal cases.

## Los Angeles County, California

Los Angeles County District Attorney Gil Garcetti created Strategies Against Gang Environments (SAGE) in December 1993 in the city of Norwalk.<sup>41</sup> The program responds to the problems of gang violence, drug dealing, and public nuisance crime. Assistant district attorneys are located in five SAGE sites, with offices generally in a city-owned office building such as a city hall or a police station. SAGE sites are in unincorporated cities in Los Angeles County, outside the city of Los Angeles, where the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office has jurisdiction over misdemeanor offenses and felonies. (In the city of Los Angeles, the city attorney handles misdemeanors.) These cities pay most of the expenses associated with the SAGE program.

SAGE attorneys are intended to be community problem solvers. They do not try many cases. One SAGE attorney works with the city attorney to focus only on gang injunctions. This attorney is not located at a particular site, but rather seeks injunctions wherever they are needed within SAGE areas to stop gangs from engaging in activities that create public nuisances (e.g., members of drug-dealing gangs are prohibited from carrying pagers and cell phones and congregating in public places). SAGE staff support trial prosecutors by providing intelligence about gangs and help law enforcement with pre-filing issues, as well as reviewing arrest reports and evaluating problem cases. SAGE staff also coordinate training for police on special issues, coordinate curfew sweeps, provide case law and training for judges on gang-related issues, facilitate information sharing among agencies, and help with information and training on the relocation of endangered witnesses. In addition, they help draft gang-related legislation.

SAGE projects include drug abatement, antiprostitution efforts, school truancy programs, legal enrichment classes for elementary school children, an antigraffiti program, and public nuisance abatement efforts. In the area of nuisance abatement, SAGE staff carry out research and draft ordinances, targeting such problems as public drinking and urination, gambling, and loitering. SAGE attorneys are also engaged in community outreach, the preparation of training materials for community-based organizations on gang prevention, intervention and suppression issues, meeting with community police advisory boards to help develop community-based antigang strategies, and assisting in planning and training sessions related to antigang measures for community members.

The Community Law Enforcement and Recovery program (CLEAR) was created in 1996 by an interagency gang task force. CLEAR is a collaboration among law enforcement agencies, public officials, and community residents working to address the community's gang problems by targeting geographic areas or specific gangs, and then using suppression, intervention, and prevention tactics. The program was created by statute (California Penal Code, Section 14000), and includes five funded partners: the Los Angeles Police

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<sup>41</sup>Information on the Los Angeles initiatives is from an interview with Nancy Lidamore, Assistant Head Deputy, Hardcore Gang Division; from the "CLEAR Program Manual," prepared by the CLEAR administrative office and Lodestar Management/Research, Inc. (January 21, 2000); and *Strategies Against Gang Environments (S.A.G.E.)*, Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office Hardcore Gang Division.

Department, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, and the Los Angeles County Probation Department. CLEAR's executive committee of representatives from these agencies meets monthly to set policy and make budget decisions.

Each agency plays a distinct role. Police and sheriffs take the lead in suppression and intelligence gathering, and make tactical decisions for certain programs. The district attorney is responsible for vertical prosecution of serious gang-related felonies, advising police on investigations when needed, handling probation violations, and providing input on community impact teams. The approach is proactive, targeting the most active gang members and aggressively filing probation and parole violations and gang enhancements when they are appropriate. The city attorney vertically prosecutes gang-related misdemeanors and uses nuisance abatement strategy to address quality-of-life issues. Probation staff track members of targeted gangs who are on active probation to ensure compliance with probation conditions and ride along with police to arrest violators. CLEAR deploys a community impact team of businessowners, residents, and other stakeholders that meets regularly with CLEAR staff to share concerns and notify them about hotspots in their neighborhoods.

There are six CLEAR sites throughout the county of Los Angeles. The first site was established in the northeast section of the city in response to the gang homicide of a small child hit by gunfire directed at her family's car as the family drove through gang territory. Depending on the caseload, up to three attorneys are assigned to each location. The attorneys' offices are located in the community, with a city attorney also assigned to each location to handle quality-of-life misdemeanors. CLEAR's goal is to locate all of the partner agencies in one office space.

CLEAR attorneys handle as many cases from their assigned areas as they can, giving priority to serious felonies and cases and defendants that are of special significance to the community. The primary focus is to remove the most violent offenders from the community. The central office trial teams that cover that particular geographic area take cases that cannot be handled by these attorneys. The program also includes intervention and prevention components designed to prevent at-risk youth from replacing gang members removed by CLEAR. For example, there is a mural program to eliminate gang graffiti, a Safe Passages program to prevent gang intimidation of children on their way home from school, as well as truancy and legal education programs for elementary school children.

## **Seattle, Washington**

The Seattle City Attorney has criminal jurisdiction over misdemeanors and responsibility for handling ordinance violations, nuisance abatement, and forfeiture matters, in addition to the civil responsibility of acting as legal council for the city and its agencies. The office employs approximately 80 attorneys, 35 in the criminal division and 45 in the civil division. The city of Seattle is an urban area measuring about 60 square miles. It has a

population of approximately 580,000, including about 70 percent white, 10 percent African-American, 10 percent Asian, and 7 percent Hispanic residents.

Seattle City Attorney Mark Sidran created the Precinct Liaison Program in 1995.<sup>42</sup> He assigned one attorney to an office in each of four police precincts to improve communication among the citizens, city attorneys, police, and other city departments; reduce crime and enhance the quality of life; and develop a more effective response to public safety problems. Each prosecutor carried a full caseload in addition to performing community outreach and helping the precinct police. The difficulty of performing both roles effectively led the office to seek additional funding. BJA funding was used to free the attorney in the West Precinct of her caseload to allow her to devote all of her time to the community and to hire a part-time clerical assistant. The success of the newly defined position led the office to create a second full-time outreach position with an attorney dividing time between the East and South Precincts. There are plans to convert the position in the North Precinct as well. Misdemeanor cases filed in the South, East, and West Precincts are generally assigned to the Vertical Prosecution Unit or to a trial division attorney, with the liaison attorney facilitating cooperation between the trial attorney and the community. The Civil Unit handles nuisance cases.

Liaison attorneys were assigned to police precincts to take advantage of police advisory boards in each precinct, as well as to facilitate a more positive relationship with the police. Each advisory board has about 225 members consisting of representatives from neighborhood organizations, local businesses, and the chamber of commerce, as well as individual citizens. Each board works with the local police to identify community problems and safety issues, and is kept informed about policy decisions. Target problems have also been identified by community organizations, using crime mapping and examining crime data for crime type issues. Hospital admissions data are reviewed to identify hotspots and develop intervention strategies. Target problems include drug paraphernalia sales, prostitution and low-rent hotels, and nuisance clubs located close to residential neighborhoods, which are a source of criminal activity and late-night noise.

The updated community prosecution effort initially focused on the West Precinct, which encompasses the downtown business district as well as some residential neighborhoods and presents a mix of problems representative of the city's major issues. The crime rate is relatively even among the precincts, but each has particular issues—high major crime rates in the East and South, car theft in the North, and inner-city problems such as drug activity in the West.

As members of advisory boards and local community organizations, citizens have input into the prosecution priorities set by the city attorney's office. Community members are kept apprised of new policies and initiatives, and of the progress of cases of interest to them. Citizens are often asked for their feedback on the impact of criminal behavior in their community. One example of neighborhood engagement is the joint effort of the

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<sup>42</sup>Information about the Seattle City Attorney's Precinct Liaison Program was obtained from interviews with Criminal Division Chief Robert Hood.

community and the liaison attorney in the West Precinct to deal with a nuisance club. The attorney set up a meeting at which the community confronted the club owner. It resulted in a “Good Neighbor Agreement,” a document created by the civil department, between the community and the owner, who consented to change troublesome business practices. Although not legally enforceable, these agreements document the owner’s awareness of the problems and can be used in court as evidence of knowledge of illegal practices as required by most ordinances. They also evidence efforts made to work with a businessowner who has agreed to make changes but failed to do so, providing the city attorney with leverage in court. Citizens are enlisted to monitor compliance with the agreements, and are able to present evidence on specific violations in court, if required to abate a continuing nuisance.

Collaboration among local agencies is an additional asset. The Neighborhood Action Team Seattle includes the city attorney, the police, and city agencies on Sector Service Teams in each of the four police precincts to handle chronic neighborhood public health and safety problems. The city has funded a full-time management position to oversee program implementation and evaluation.

## **Howard County, Maryland**

The Community Justice Program was created by Howard County State’s Attorney Marna McLendon in 1996 as a school-based pilot program, Caring for the Community, in two sites.<sup>43</sup> The State’s Attorney’s Office created a steering committee that included police, parole, probation, and juvenile justice officials, citizen services representatives, and representatives of the Department of Social Services in the selection of target areas and issues to be addressed. The state’s attorney held focus groups in the schools to obtain input from children about their problems. The program was expanded in January 1999 and now operates countywide, involving the entire staff of 23 full-time and 3 part-time attorneys, in addition to a full-time community justice coordinator.

Nineteen attorneys have been assigned to 19 zones as liaisons in the community. They meet with community organizations, attend council meetings, ride with police officers, talk with school officials, and attend community events to identify the criminal justice issues that residents find most disruptive. Because these attorneys also carry a full caseload, the time that they have available in the community is constrained. Nonetheless, they are expected to attend at least one community meeting per month. Felony cases are prosecuted vertically, but because of the organization of the two criminal courts, which are located in two separate buildings and control the scheduling of cases, it is not practical for cases to be assigned to the prosecutors on a geographic basis. As a result, the attorney liaisons do not necessarily try cases from their zones. The community prosecution initiative is supplemented with an additional attorney responsible for the Hot Spot program, a state-level initiative promoted by the governor’s office. The Hot Spot attorney, whose salary is

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<sup>43</sup>Information on the Howard County Community Justice Program is from an interview with State’s Attorney Marna McLendon; from “Prosecutor Program Wins Grant,” *Baltimore Sun*, Howard Edition, page 1B (August 2, 2000); and from the Community Justice Program pamphlet published by the Office of the State’s Attorney, Howard County, Maryland.

paid through state funds, is able to devote full time to community prosecution in two high crime areas selected by the governor's office. She carries a reduced caseload of cases important to the community and shares an office with the Hot Spot team.

The community justice program has both a reactive and a proactive component. The reactive component targets defendants who are arrested for crimes that are a significant concern to the community, giving them high priority even if the actual crimes committed would ordinarily be considered relatively minor. These cases are tracked through the trial process, and citizens are encouraged to attend sentencing hearings or to submit statements to be used at sentencing to inform the judge about the impact of those crimes on the community. The goal of the proactive component is to develop solutions, in collaboration with the police and the community, that are outside the traditional arrest and convict strategy by understanding the neighborhood's specific crime issues.

## **Plymouth County (Brockton), Massachusetts**

Community prosecution in Plymouth County has been operating since 1996 when Plymouth County District Attorney Michael Sullivan implemented the Safe Neighborhood Initiative (SNI).<sup>44</sup> SNI provides residents and other local stakeholders with direct access to the district attorney's office and other government officials, with whom they meet regularly. Two assistant attorneys general and two assistant district attorneys have been assigned to do community prosecution in Brockton, a city of many different immigrant groups. Each attorney carries a caseload that is handled using targeted, priority prosecution, which expedites case processing. District court cases, which include misdemeanors and low-level felonies, are tried within 60 days. Superior court cases, which include the most serious felony trials, are also expedited although not quite as fast. (Because there are more cases than the three attorneys can handle, the rest are randomly assigned to the trial attorneys.) SNI attorneys partner with the state police, who also have targeted Brockton with intensive patrols and proactive undercover operations, using a zero tolerance approach to gang and drug crime. A strong relationship with community residents familiarizes prosecutors with the details of the neighborhood where the crimes are committed and builds a better understanding of criminals' histories and how they relate to quality-of-life issues in the neighborhood.<sup>45</sup>

Programs run by the district attorney's office include the Abandoned Houses Project, created by the 1993 Receivership Statute.<sup>46</sup> The statute empowers the district attorney or other public agency to bring an action requesting that a receiver be appointed to oversee the rehabilitation of a residential property that has been the subject of persistent code violations. After repairs have been made, the cost of the renovations is assessed against the

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<sup>44</sup>Information on Plymouth County is from an interview with Assistant District Attorney William Asci of the Brockton Safe Neighborhood Initiative and from the Plymouth County District Attorney's web site, [www.magnet.state.ma.us](http://www.magnet.state.ma.us).

<sup>45</sup>For a more complete description of the Safe Neighborhood Initiative, see Suffolk County, Massachusetts.

<sup>46</sup>Massachusetts General Laws, Section 1271, Chapter 111 (1993).

owner of the property as a priority lien. Should the owner fail to pay, the receiver may foreclose on the property to pay the debts and transfer ownership to a responsible landlord.

The district attorney notifies landlords of drug activity on their property and informs them that, under state law, landlords who allow tenants who have been violating drug laws to remain in their buildings without attempting to evict them face possible civil action and criminal prosecution. The district attorney's office also collaborates with Boys & Girls Clubs of Brockton to offer programs targeting at-risk youth, including a Peer Mediation Program and the Gang Prevention through Targeted Outreach Program.

## **Washington, D.C., United States Attorney's Office**

In June 1996, U.S. Attorney Eric H. Holder, Jr., created a pilot community prosecution program in the Fifth Police District, geographically assigning 19 assistant U.S. attorneys to patrol service areas (PSAs) in that district, to handle matters relating to that community.<sup>47</sup> Trial attorneys in the community prosecution unit prosecuted cases assigned to them vertically. Two attorneys did community outreach only and did not try cases.

In August 1999, the program was expanded to cover the entire city. Adaptation of the community prosecution philosophy to cover this area required several office adjustments. The Community Prosecution Major Crimes Division (CPMC) was created. Six teams of prosecutors, headed by a district chief, were assigned to handle major crimes and crimes of importance in the seven police districts. The Grand Jury/Intake Division, which evaluates cases brought in by police, was divided into teams of prosecutors assigned to police districts and each headed by a senior prosecutor. These attorneys are responsible for spending time at their district police station and in the community, working with residents and police directly. This division now makes initial screening decisions for community prosecution cases and ensures that these cases and the information elicited during interrogations and briefings are forwarded to the CPMC division. Designated attorneys in the misdemeanor and narcotics divisions work within the police districts, in effect, as members of the CPMC division. In addition, seven community outreach specialists and a supervisor have been assigned to and physically located at each police district as the liaison to the police and the community. They perform a problem-solving role, taking complaints and making referrals to appropriate agencies. The civil division of the U.S. Attorney's Office also plays a role in problem solving, working with the forfeiture unit in the narcotics section and with law enforcement generally to identify nuisance properties that could be subject to abatement or forfeiture. Finally, a drug-related nuisance task force has been created consisting of assistant U.S. attorneys from the civil and criminal divisions and community outreach specialists to help address drug-related nuisances in the city.

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<sup>47</sup>Information on the Washington, D.C., community prosecution program is from materials supplied by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Clifford Keenan and DeMaurice Smith.

## Denver, Colorado

Denver District Attorney William Ritter established the Community Prosecution Program in 1996 to be more responsive to the concerns of Denver's residents over low-level crime that was affecting the quality of their daily lives (Wolf, 2000: 1).<sup>48</sup> The program is staffed by a director, a community justice coordinator, three community justice advocates, and eight deputy district attorneys, two assigned to each targeted neighborhood. In addition to community work, these attorneys also carry a full caseload from their own prosecution units.<sup>49</sup> They collaborate with the juvenile diversion program, the victim services unit, and the Weed and Seed program. (Geographical prosecution is not practical in Denver because of the manner in which the court system controls case scheduling.)

A community justice advocate is assigned to each target area to perform community outreach and to act as facilitator for the Community Justice Councils that represent community interests in Globeville and Capitol Hill. The attorneys attend community meetings and work on specific neighborhood projects with local organizations and community police. The goals of the division include developing community capacity, involving the community in problem-solving partnerships with justice agencies, developing crime prevention and intervention strategies, coordinating law enforcement response to community crime problems, and focusing prosecution resources where they are most needed (Ritter and Motika, 1999).

The Community Prosecution Division has established Community Justice Councils of neighborhood stakeholders. The councils meet once a month to identify neighborhood crime and quality-of-life issues, and to develop and coordinate strategies for dealing with them. They voice community concerns for community prosecutors to address. Residents are surveyed and interviewed to identify their principal concerns, which are prioritized by the councils. There are currently 2 councils, consisting of 20 to 35 members chosen by community prosecutors through in-depth interviews.<sup>50</sup> The first council was formed in 1997 in Denver's Globeville neighborhood, an area that has a number of risk factors, including high unemployment, a large minority population, and a high percentage of children living in poverty. Through group exercises on community problem identification, lack of parental supervision was identified as a high-priority problem in Globeville. Several strategies were created to address the problem, including the establishment of a special summer school for at-risk youth. The Globeville council also identified speeding as a pressing problem. Council members agreed to keep a log of information on speeding hotspots, identifying times that were most problematic as well as the age range of the drivers and the vehicle types involved. The information was to be analyzed and used to support the deployment of enforcement strategies such as selective use of radar. The information was also to be

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<sup>48</sup>Information on Denver's Community Prosecution Division is from an interview and materials provided by Susan Motika; site visits to Capitol Hill and Globeville in April 2000; discussions with Community Justice Coordinator David Mrakitsch and Community Justice Advocate Erin Lange; Wolf, 2000; "The Denver District Attorney's Office: Community Prosecution in Denver" (June, 1999); Ritter and Motika, 1999.

<sup>49</sup>Wolf, 2000.

<sup>50</sup>The process is described by Susan Motika in "Best Practices" on [www.communityjustice.org](http://www.communityjustice.org) and Wolf, 2000.

assessed to determine if the violators were primarily residents, which would require a change in community norms in addition to any proposed law enforcement response.

The Community Prosecution Division also has established Community Accountability Boards (CABs), which are focused on restorative justice, or repairing the harm caused by crime. The boards connect juvenile offenders who have committed property crimes with their victims and members of the affected community to develop appropriate strategies for holding youth accountable for their actions and for repairing the harm they have done.<sup>51</sup> Juvenile diversion and probation programs at the municipal and state levels may refer a juvenile to a community group conference. The juvenile, his or her parents, and CAB members attend the conference. The juvenile must admit to the charges, and the board imposes age-appropriate and community-based penalties. An assets worksheet is administered to the juvenile prior to the conference to elicit his interests and talents so that they can be incorporated into the community-based solution, if possible. CAB is staffed by a community justice coordinator (program director) and a full-time neighborhood justice coordinator, who is a resident of the community served. The CAB program increases community involvement in the justice system by recruiting neighborhood residents to conduct the conferences with juvenile offenders.

Community safety forums are held in response to community requests for information about certain issues. One such request was for community education on nuisance abatement. The forums were held on Saturday mornings in the four targeted neighborhoods, each drawing between 50 and 100 neighborhood residents. Forums on graffiti and municipal code violations and enforcement have also been held.

## **Erie County (Buffalo), New York**

Former County District Attorney Kevin Dillon started community prosecution in Erie County in 1996, with funding from New York State, to join with a community justice effort started by the Buffalo police.<sup>52</sup> The Erie County District Attorney's Office, which employs 92 attorneys, has jurisdiction over misdemeanors and felonies (the state attorney general handles civil matters, including forfeiture and nuisance cases). Erie County is primarily urban. The city of Buffalo, chosen as the first community prosecution site, has a diverse population that is more than 30 percent minority, as well as a large percentage of low-income residents and the highest crime rate in the county.

The objectives of Erie County's community prosecution program are to engage the community in identifying neighborhood problems and creating and implementing strategies to solve those problems, and to improve community relations. Two experienced prosecutors are assigned to these tasks, each with more than 14 years in the office. Their

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<sup>51</sup>The process is described in Ritter and Motika, 1999: 2 and Wolf, 2000. In 1998–1999, the Colorado General Assembly passed H.B. 99-1156, which provides for the use of a restorative justice process in the juvenile justice system (Ritter and Motika, 1999: 2).

<sup>52</sup>Information about the Erie County District Attorney's Office community prosecution program was obtained from interviews with Assistant District Attorney Michael Drmacich.

offices are in the city court building in Buffalo and are accessible to neighborhood residents. Although most contacts are by phone, citizens can drop in to speak with the attorneys at any time. The community prosecutors attend an average of two community meetings per week. Block club representatives attend hearings to monitor the progress and outcomes of cases of interest to the community, as well as to alert the judge to community concerns.

The attorneys focus on misdemeanor quality-of-life offenses, the most pressing of which include car break-ins, prostitution, and nuisance properties. Although community outreach is their priority, they carry a reduced (but significant) caseload of about 350 cases per year involving misdemeanors of community importance, most referred to them by the community or the police, or involving repeat offenders or crime types that have been troublesome to the area. Prosecution is generally not vertical. Misdemeanor litigators handle most preliminary hearings and community prosecutors receive cases at a later stage. Felonies and overflow misdemeanor cases go to the trials division, where community prosecutors act as liaisons between the neighborhood and the trial attorneys.

The police, the corporation counsel, who represents the city on civil matters, and the Office of Community Development are the main agencies that collaborate with the community prosecutors on a regular basis. The community prosecutors are legal advisors to the police and facilitate the relationship by teaching courses at the police academy and occasionally sitting in on police operations.

The community prosecutors work alongside police on a prostitution task force. They administer the Johns School, a 1-day class for individuals charged with soliciting a prostitute. The faculty includes the prosecutor, who educates participants about the legal issues involved, former prostitutes, a public health nurse, and community members who talk about the impact of the crime on their community. First-time offenders who participate may ultimately have their charges dismissed upon satisfactory completion of the program. The Magdalene Program, for prostitutes who are first-time offenders, provides drug treatment and screening for social and human service needs. The court mandates participation in recommended programs and satisfactory completion may result in dismissal of the charges.

## **Phoenix, Arizona**

The Phoenix City Prosecutor's Office employs 65 attorneys, and has jurisdiction over violations of city civil ordinances, state misdemeanors, and nuisance and forfeiture cases. Phoenix, the city with the sixth largest population in the United States, is an urban area of about 450 square miles.

The community prosecution program was created in 1996 under the leadership of City Prosecutor Kerry Wangberg.<sup>53</sup> Community input helped determine the selection of the four

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<sup>53</sup>Information about the Phoenix City Prosecutor's Office community prosecution program was obtained from interviews with Director of Community Prosecution Arron Carreon-Ainsa.

target sites. Prosecutors attended community meetings to inform residents of their intentions and to find out about community perceptions of crime and the type of help that was needed. The first site was located in Westwood, in a donated office space shared with community police officers. Westwood, the most densely populated area in Phoenix, was selected because it had an active neighborhood association, a viable association of rental property owners, and a strong link with the Department of Neighborhood Services. It also had the first or second highest crime rate in Phoenix. The prosecutor's office organized meetings, listened to problems, and made plans to combine the resources of the community. One problem was that many of the area's 171 apartment buildings were in disrepair. Community prosecutors teamed with the police department and the Neighborhood Services Department to turn them around, advising property owners to make necessary repairs or face prosecution.

A second site, Palomino, had a Safe Neighborhoods grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Neighborhood leaders sought community prosecution to complement their community justice effort. The site operates from a storefront office rented by the city, which also houses other community service agencies. The third site was opened in Granada, housed in what was once a residential treatment facility. The fourth was placed in Garfield, in combination with an existing Weed and Seed program. It shares space with several neighborhood associations and the local community police.

The role of the community consists of identifying problems and helping to create solutions and carry them out. Residents testify at hearings for cases of community interest and help plan search warrant execution in their neighborhoods. They are instrumental in an antiprostitution project, where they testify on the terms of release for patrons arrested in their communities. Sentences often include exclusion from the neighborhood, and fliers with photographs of the offenders and details of their arrest are posted so residents can notify the police if they spot an offender.

The five community prosecutors try few cases, but they do handle cases of importance to their neighborhoods. Most litigation is handled by the trials division, which also handles forfeiture and code enforcement cases. Criminal cases are prosecuted vertically. Phoenix community prosecutors collaborate mainly with neighborhood services, local police, developmental services, the city health department, the housing and planning department, and the fire department.

## **Santa Clara County, California**

The Community Prosecution Unit was created by Santa Clara County District Attorney George Kennedy between 1996 and 1997.<sup>54</sup> It is staffed by seven experienced prosecutors who are placed in each of the five districts in the community to work with local citizens,

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<sup>54</sup>Information on the Santa Clara community prosecution program comes from interviews with Deputy District Attorney Christopher Arriola and Assistant District Attorney Marc Buller, Supervisor of the Community Prosecution Unit, and from the Santa Clara District Attorney's Office web site, [www.santaclarada.org](http://www.santaclarada.org).

businesses, and county and city agencies. Specific issues addressed by community prosecutors include youth crime prevention, graffiti, gang and drug problems, and school safety. The attorneys divide their time between the central office and field offices located in community justice centers in their assigned neighborhoods, which also house other criminal justice agents such as public defenders and probation officers. They generally do not try cases; their main responsibility is community outreach and problem solving. On cases of special interest to their communities, the attorneys act as liaisons between the trial attorney and the community, providing intelligence to the trial attorney and keeping the community informed about the status of the case. Community prosecutors also review cases filed by local police and try to detect crime patterns using crime mapping and other strategies.

Prosecutor-initiated community programs include Operation Spotlight and the Restorative Justice Program. Operation Spotlight was created in collaboration with the probation office's Restorative Justice Project and joins community prosecutors with a technical team of representatives from other city and county agencies. They focus on a selected small area within the community prosecution site, generally about four blocks, to identify neighborhood problems and develop strategies to solve them. Meetings and events are scheduled by the prosecutor in the spotlighted area and bring together the prosecutor, the technical team, the probation office's community coordinator, and the community. Neighborhood-selected block captains act as liaisons between the community and law enforcement. The technical team wraps the community with services as part of a plan to clean up the area, improve services, and rally the neighborhood to take action to help themselves.

Restorative justice in Santa Clara County is a three-pronged effort consisting of community protection, offender accountability to victims and the community, and competency development. The program is run cooperatively by the community prosecutors and the Juvenile Probation Department as a diversion program that targets first-time offenders charged with low-level offenses. Neighborhood Accountability Boards have been created, consisting of residents who have been trained to handle the cases and assign appropriate sanctions. The offenders must face their victim and members of the community to deal with their offenses. The probation office also evaluates the offenders to determine their needs and provide services, including educational and vocational assistance and counseling to deal with family or drug and alcohol issues.

## **Pima County (Tucson), Arizona**

The Community Outreach Unit was created in 1997 by Pima County Attorney Barbara LeWall.<sup>55</sup> It is staffed by one full-time attorney who maintains offices both in the field and in the main county attorney's office. This attorney is responsible for the outreach and problem solving that takes place in the community. The staff also includes a part-time attorney who administers the Communities Addressing Responsible Gun Ownership

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<sup>55</sup>Information on community prosecution in Pima County is from an interview with Deputy County Attorney Christine Curtis and from "Civil Remedies Outline 1999–2000," Pima County Attorney's Office.

(CARGO) program, which promotes gun safety and responsible ownership through presentations at schools and community meetings. The community prosecutors do not try cases. Felony cases originating from target areas are randomly assigned to the trials division, which is organized by major crimes according to type. Misdemeanors are handled by the city attorney's office, which has its own community prosecution unit, with whom the county community prosecutor maintains a working relationship.

The community prosecution initiative originally targeted Pueblo Gardens, an urban residential community with serious crime problems but with some community organization and a relationship with community police. It has since expanded to cover adjacent suburban, residential, and commercial areas that include the city of South Tucson, which is surrounded by and separate from the city of Tucson. The community prosecutor's involvement in officer training at the police academy and "ride-alongs" with patrol officers helps to solidify her relationship with the police officers in her area. Her immersion in the community through attendance at community meetings and involvement with neighborhood organizations and associations enables her to operate effectively despite the size of the area and the demands on her time. She considers the community to be the most important element of her efforts, acting as her eyes and ears in the neighborhood and offering input on shaping program priorities and problem-solving strategies. In response to community issues, the community prosecutor implemented Operation Spotlight in South Tucson. It is a collaborative effort with the probation department, the community, and local police to monitor and share information about offenders released on probation in the area. The program supports reentering offenders through community-based probation and services intended both to help them succeed and to protect the community from those who do not. The group meets weekly to discuss community issues and develop solutions. They also have team training sessions on problem-solving techniques.

In addition, the community prosecutor addresses nuisance property issues by using civil law to force property owners to take responsibility for what takes place on the premises they lease. Four specific civil remedies are available to help the community solve problems and play a more active role in the criminal justice process. These remedies are not limited to the community prosecution areas, but rather are used throughout Pima County.

### **Crime-Free Multihousing/Storage/Condominium Program**

The community prosecutor has trained the police in conducting a program that provides landlords with assistance in maintaining crime-free properties. Landlords receive step-by-step written instructions on how to evict tenants who break the law. They also are given a crime-free lease addendum, a written agreement by tenants not to engage in, or allow on the leased premises, any criminal activities, such as prostitution, drug sales, and gang-related activities. Violation of the agreement is a lease violation and grounds for eviction. A record is made of the eviction and is accessible to any future landlord who screens prospective tenants.

## **Crime Property Abatement Law**

This law defines residential property used for criminal activity as a nuisance. A nuisance action can be filed in civil court by the attorney general, the county attorney, the city attorney, or a resident affected by the nuisance. The owner, manager, or any other party responsible for the property can be sued. Once notice is given to this party that a nuisance exists, failure to take reasonable steps to stop the activity gives rise to the cause of action. Remedies include civil penalties of up to \$10,000, closure of the property, damages, court costs, and attorney's fees. The community prosecutor provides the community with written instructions on the steps that must be taken to set up a successful nuisance action.

## **Forfeitures**

Arizona law provides for the forfeiture of property used to commit or facilitate the commission of various offenses. Owners are subject to forfeiture of their property if they know that criminal conduct is occurring or is likely to occur, and fail to take action to stop it. If the landlord is involved, even if he or she is acquitted of the underlying charge, the court may still uphold the forfeiture of property.

## **Victims' Rights**

Community prosecution is further aided by Arizona law, which allows neighborhood associations that are registered with the city to invoke the same rights afforded to an individual victim with regard to tracking a criminal case and having a voice about it in court. These include the right to be notified of certain court proceedings relative to the alleged crime, the right to be present at court proceedings, the right to make a statement at juvenile disposition or adult sentencing hearings, and the right to privacy. The latter shields witnesses who testify at the hearing from answering questions about their home address and telephone number.

## **Jackson County (Kansas City), Missouri**

Jackson County Prosecutor Claire McCaskill created the community prosecution program, the Neighborhood Justice Team, in Kansas City in 1997 to address quality-of-life crimes.<sup>56</sup> The program is funded by the Community-Backed Anti-Drug Tax (COMBAT), a county sales tax enacted by voters in 1990 to provide funding for antidrug programs and drug law enforcement initiatives. Six prosecutors are assigned to cover the city, which is divided into six geographic areas—four in urban Kansas City and two in suburban and rural areas. The attorneys spend most of their time in field offices located in the police bureaus in their assigned areas, but they also have offices in the main district attorney's office. They work with the community, which provides them with input about community issues and problems, participates in the criminal justice system by testifying at trials and sentencing hearings, and is involved in the creation and implementation of problem-solving initiatives. The attorneys carry a reduced caseload that focuses on the community they serve. The

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<sup>56</sup>Information on the community prosecution program in Jackson County is from an interview and materials provided by Chief Trial Assistant Kathy Finnell and from Coles, 1997.

remaining cases are assigned by crime type to appropriate units of the trials division, which is organized according to major crimes. Only sex and domestic violence crimes are prosecuted vertically.

The neighborhood prosecutors focus a considerable amount of their time on problem solving, engaging all levels of government agencies, business coalitions, religious groups, and virtually any individual or group with resources and a stake in the community, to respond to community issues. All programs and resources generated by COMBAT are available, including programs such as the Drug Abatement Response Team (DART) and the drug court, a diversion and treatment program that was created in 1993 for drug-involved offenders without a history of violence or possession of drugs in large amounts for distribution. Civil remedies, through state nuisance and eviction laws, provide opportunities in addition to criminal convictions to rid the community of drug dealers and other problem situations.

In 1997, the prosecutor's office led a COMBAT-funded antidrug initiative representing property owners; community and neighborhood organizations; local, state, and federal officials; city, state, and federal prosecutors; HUD; and the FBI. The initiative cleaned up a 15-block area called the "Paseo Corridor," one of the worst crime areas in the city using lease/agreement regulations, demolishing abandoned buildings, and using landlord/tenant laws to expedite evictions for drug-related crimes in both private and public housing. Officials reported a 50-percent reduction in crime within the first year, and statements from residents that they felt safer.

## **Honolulu, Hawaii**

The community prosecution program in Honolulu was implemented in 1997 under Prosecuting Attorney Peter Carlisle to reduce crime and fear by creating partnerships with the community, law enforcement, and governmental agencies to address quality-of-life problems.<sup>57</sup> The program is operated by the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney using three full-time attorneys who work out of the main office in downtown Honolulu. Each attorney is assigned to one of three community prosecution sites, located in urban and suburban areas, and is responsible for community outreach. In addition, each has a legal specialty (domestic violence, juvenile prosecutions, and drug-related or general cases) and is responsible for prosecuting cases that involve that specialty emerging from any of the three sites. Community prosecution attorneys carry caseloads of 50 to 200 cases. However, they are unable to cover all of the cases that are generated by the community prosecution sites and generally take the more serious or complicated felony cases, and/or the cases of greatest significance to the community. The intake division screens incoming cases. Cases originating from community prosecution sites are flagged and passed along to the community prosecution supervisor, who then makes the case assignments. Overflow cases are assigned to the office's trial teams, which are organized according to major crimes

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<sup>57</sup>Information on the Honolulu community prosecution program is from an interview with Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Claire Merry and "Special Report: Community Prosecution Program," Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, City and County of Honolulu (January 2000).

rather than geographically. Cases in each specialty are randomly assigned to the appropriate team. Vertical prosecution is used for all criminal cases, with the exception of petty misdemeanor, nonjury trial cases. Community prosecutors collaborate with community policing teams, federal prosecutors, and citizen groups.

Division projects include narcotics and prostitution abatement programs, in which prosecutors mobilize community residents and train them in abatement techniques. In Waikiki, the tourism industry was suffering because of the prostitution problem. The Prostitution Abatement Task Force filed a nuisance abatement action to impose geographical restrictions against known prostitutes in the Waikiki district. Upon conviction, they are banned from the area as a condition of probation. The prosecutors also introduced legislation to prohibit prostitutes from the district, which passed in 1998. In addition, a 12-week prostitution intervention program is available for women getting out of the profession. Free workshops are held on topics related to health, building self-esteem, and access to community resources.

The prosecutors are involved in the Weed and Seed program in Oahu. A special Weed and Seed court fast-tracks cases and the Honolulu Drug Court also handles appropriate cases. Preliminary results of Weed and Seed indicate that the majority of misdemeanor cases were disposed of early with no contest pleas.

Honolulu has received a BJA community prosecution grant for a new project, which is a partnership between the prosecutor's office and the school district to prevent and reduce youth violence. A community relations specialist will be hired by the prosecutor's office to assess violence on school campuses and develop strategies to address this problem. This individual will be a liaison among educators, families, community organizations, and the prosecutor's office on youth violence issues. One need that has been identified is for schools to know about adjudicated youth who are being returned to classes. Information must be shared among the agencies that deal with these young people. The community relations specialist will also provide training for school faculty and staff in areas such as identifying children at risk, handling the delinquent child in the classroom, and making referrals to the juvenile justice system. Teachers will be educated about the resources available to address these children's issues.

## **San Diego, California**

The San Diego City Attorney has jurisdiction over all misdemeanors committed within the city, provides legal advice to city agencies, represents them in civil matters, and handles civil litigation such as nuisance abatement and forfeitures. The city attorney's office employs 65 attorneys and prosecutes approximately 40,000 misdemeanor cases each year.

San Diego City Attorney Casey Gwinn created the Neighborhood Prosecution Unit in 1997.<sup>58</sup> Two attorneys worked citywide on projects identified by the community police and

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<sup>58</sup>Information about the San Diego City Attorney's Office Neighborhood Prosecution Unit was obtained from interviews and information provided by Neighborhood Prosecution Unit Division Head Joan Dawson.

vertically prosecuted cases generated through the Problem Oriented Policing Program consisting of quality-of-life crimes such as loitering for prostitution and racing cars on city streets. In July 2000, the program was restructured. There are currently four attorneys involved in the community prosecution effort including the head deputy city attorney, who supervises the program, and a second attorney who is engaged full time as the coordinator for the community court initiative. Two neighborhood prosecutors have been placed in field offices in police substations where they walk the beat with community police, attend community meetings, and vertically prosecute a reduced caseload of cases selected for their importance to the community. The city is divided into eight police districts, including the pilot sites of Mid City and Central. Mid City, an area undergoing revitalization, was selected because of its high crime rate. The Central site, which includes both downtown and residential areas, has a diverse population. Its residents speak more than a dozen languages. Target problems include prostitution, graffiti, vandalism, and drug-related crime. Problem-solving initiatives include the Prostitution Task Force, Community Safety Initiative, and community service centers.

### **Prostitution Task Force**

This initiative combines the efforts of the city attorney, the police, and the community to respond to prostitution in two ways. First, a community impact panel of residents, businessowners, and representatives from community-based organizations meets with individuals who have offended in their communities to inform them of the impact that prostitution has on their neighborhoods. On the panel are former prostitutes and patrons who share their experiences with the offenders. Second, various social service agencies and programs are brought together to work on getting prostitutes off the streets and providing them with needed services, such as drug and alcohol treatment, vocational training, counseling, and help in finding affordable housing. The task force meets on a monthly basis and is chaired by the neighborhood prosecutor.

### **Community Safety Initiative**

This is also a collaborative program, teaming the police, city attorneys, schools, and community groups to increase the understanding of middle school-aged youth about the criminal justice system. The 8-week program includes instruction from criminal justice officials, tours of the criminal courthouse and local police station, and a mock trial in which the students participate as attorneys, witnesses, victims, and jury members. The neighborhood prosecutor acts as the judge. The program began in Mid City and has been expanded into schools in the Central district.

### **Community Service Centers**

Fourteen community service centers have been set up in locations around the city to decentralize city agency service providers, with neighborhood prosecutors acting as liaisons between agency representatives and the community. Monday through Thursday, residents can meet with representatives from these agencies in their neighborhoods rather than having to travel into the city. Each center has space available to residents for community meetings. To further facilitate problem solving, neighborhood prosecutors have

developed a resource guide that details where residents can go with problems that are outside the prosecutors' range of expertise.

## **Kalamazoo County, Michigan**

The Kalamazoo County Prosecuting Attorney's Office created the Neighborhood Prosecuting Attorney Program in 1998 under Prosecuting Attorney James Gregart.<sup>59</sup> The program focuses on quality-of-life issues and crime prevention, specifically targeting domestic violence, substance abuse, and juvenile violence. The neighborhood prosecuting attorney acts as a community liaison. Two community prosecutors in this office are presently assigned to field offices in two neighborhoods. The attorneys vertically prosecute a small number of select cases that are of particular importance to their communities. The remainder of their time is spent networking with the community to solve problems.

The first site was located in Edison, one of the oldest cities in Kalamazoo County, where 60 percent of the residents rent their homes and the crime rate is one of the highest in the county. The community already had some business and neighborhood associations. In addition, community police officers assigned to the neighborhood already had a positive relationship with residents. Program goals, which were set by residents, identified housing and youth problems as high priorities. Some of the rental units in the neighborhood were deteriorating because of landlords' neglect. The community prosecution attorney identified the owners of these buildings and brought in the housing authority to handle the problem. Residents were trained to testify at hearings and informed of the type of information that was needed. Criminal prosecutions were initiated. As a result, the court ordered landlords to sell the properties that they could not afford or did not want to repair.

Youth issues involved truancy and curfew violations. Youth were hanging out in the neighborhood after-hours drinking, using drugs, and making noise. In 1999, the problem was addressed by creating a curfew/truancy program operated through the Boys & Girls Club, known as the Center for Leadership Options for Community Kids (CLOCK). Police now cite young violators of state curfew laws and repeat truants, take them to the club, and contact their parents and/or teachers. The center operates a voluntary diversion program. Youth who refuse the program are referred to juvenile court. Program participants are assessed for personal, school, family, and employment issues and referred to appropriate agencies for help. They are taught leadership skills and connected with other positive activities. If the youth stay out of trouble for a period of time, the charges against them are dropped and their cases are not referred to juvenile court. If a juvenile gets into more trouble, the charges are referred and the youth ends up in the justice system. This fairly sizeable and ongoing program seems to be having the desired impact (Reifert, 2000, and Karen Hayter, personal communication).

A recent evaluation of the program indicates that the Edison site has experienced a 17-percent reduction in Part I crimes since the community prosecution program was initiated,

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<sup>59</sup>Information about community prosecution in Kalamazoo County is from interviews with Senior Neighborhood Prosecutor Karen Hayter and Reifert, 2000.

in contrast to the 4-percent reduction experienced in the rest of Kalamazoo County (Reifert, 2000).

The success of community prosecution efforts in Edison led to the opening of a second site in the North Side community in October 1999. Residents were complaining about an open-air drug market, and the office brought in an undercover drug team that uses special tactics, such as reverse stings. Users caught in the investigation receive a special sentencing option providing substance abuse treatment and dismissal of charges if they successfully complete the program.

## **Cook County (Chicago), Illinois**

Although the Cook County State's Attorney's Office had a community prosecution program as early as 1973, officials consider the current program, created in 1998 by Cook County Attorney Richard A. Devina, to be an unrelated effort.<sup>60</sup> The catalyst for the current initiative was the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategies (CAPS) program, established by the Chicago Police Department in 1992. CAPS placed officers in communities to encourage residential involvement in crime prevention strategies and participation in the prosecution of cases in court (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). CAPS encouraged the formation of citizens groups and successfully created networks of cooperation in many neighborhoods. As the police sought to address community problems, the need for the legal expertise of the prosecutor's office to devise and implement solutions became clear. In addition, residents suggested that minor quality-of-life problems that most affected neighborhoods were being overlooked or not handled effectively by the prosecutor's office. As residents' needs became clear through CAPS, the state's attorney's office began to respond to them more effectively. It was in the neighborhoods where CAPS had created networks with residents and community organizations that the county state's attorney's office began its community prosecution efforts.

Today, 11 prosecutors are dedicated to the community prosecution effort, including 2 supervisors and a prevention coordinator. Two attorneys are assigned to each of four community prosecution sites in Cook County. The pilot site began on the ethnically diverse North Side of the city in the 20th Police District. The community prosecution office was staffed by two prosecutors, an experienced attorney to handle felonies, and another attorney with 2 to 3 years of experience to handle misdemeanors.

Community prosecutors use a vertical prosecution strategy in cases of importance to the community and focus on crimes committed by repeat offenders. They track the cases prosecuted by other attorneys, providing assistance and background intelligence for the trial attorneys to facilitate communication with the community, victims, and witnesses. These overflow cases are randomly assigned to the general trials teams and the major crimes divisions by crime type. The community prosecutors spend mornings in court handling their sizeable caseloads and afternoons in their offices doing paperwork and

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<sup>60</sup>Information on Chicago's community prosecution program is from an interview with Deputy Supervisor of Community Prosecution Neera Walsh.

responding to community concerns. The office is accessible to neighborhood residents, who are free to walk in and speak with the attorneys. Prosecutors meet with community groups and attend meetings approximately two evenings per week to discuss issues and problem-solving strategies.

A steering committee was created in each of the four community prosecution sites to facilitate problem-solving efforts. Members of the steering committees include local aldermen, representatives of city services, the parks authority, the school board, social service agencies, the police, the City Attorney's Office, and large community-based organizations. The participation of this full array of organizations strengthens efforts to respond to neighborhood problems that are beyond the direct control of the prosecutor.

### **Liquor Store Owners Rights and Responsibilities Program**

There were numerous liquor stores in the poor neighborhoods targeted; their owners sold single serving portions to patrons and encouraged them to loiter outside their stores to drink. This practice was banned. Owners were informed of the rules of operation in the community, their rights, and the help they could expect from police and prosecutors in implementing these policies.

### **Summer Opportunity Program for Kids**

This program was started in response to complaints from the community that youth were hanging out on the streets during the summer. The youth told community prosecutors that they wanted summer jobs, so businessowners were persuaded to offer jobs and internships. Opportunities were provided for the youth to talk to criminal justice officials, especially police, to discuss issues and problems that were resulting in confrontations between groups.

### **Hate Crimes Strategy**

The community prosecution program handles hate crimes, prosecuting these cases vertically and educating police on their proper handling. Prosecutors give talks to school children about such crimes and what is being done about them. This emphasis on hate crimes was triggered by an incident that occurred during the Fourth of July weekend in 1999, when an individual went on a shooting spree, targeting minority victims. Four people were killed, and others were wounded before the assailant killed himself.

### **Nassau County, New York**

Although Nassau County, on suburban Long Island, has one of the lowest crime rates in the nation, crime problems have developed in lower income urban and suburban areas of the county where the population includes a high percentage of adolescents. In 1998, Nassau County District Attorney Denis Dillon implemented a proactive strategy to reduce crime and improve life in the county and established the first community prosecution site

in the village of Hempstead.<sup>61</sup> He hired a community prosecutor who began to create relationships with residents, citizens' associations, and local stakeholders by attending community meetings and publishing a community newsletter. Dillon hosted meetings with leaders from the minority community and civic and religious organizations to find out about areas of concern. He formed a community advisory group of residents and other stakeholders to facilitate communication and provide feedback on existing programs and propose new strategies to respond to community issues.

One problem was a lack of afterschool programs that left many youth unsupervised and resulted in elevated levels of juvenile crime. To address this concern, Dillon created a partnership between his office and the Boys & Girls Club, Big Brothers and Sisters, local police, and the public schools to develop afterschool and mentoring programs aimed at intervention and prevention. The Rising Star Program is the product of this partnership. The office coordinated the program using forfeiture monies, which were supplemented in 1999 with a grant from BJA. Beginning in 1998, a summer program for at-risk youth from Hempstead was offered in one of the public schools. A soccer program was started for children in grades one through eight. A free summer camp provided soccer training for 8 weeks, and more than 150 youth participated. A sports mentoring program was established which offered guidance and training in boxing and lacrosse, and a golden gloves boxing team was established in Hempstead Village.

Nuisance properties were another community priority, specifically rental properties used for drug dealing. Trespass/eviction procedures were put in place to evict tenants who used their homes to distribute drugs. Procedures were set up with landlords and police to compile resident lists for apartment buildings, so that individuals who were neither guests nor residents of the building (drug buyers) could be arrested and charged with trespassing.

Due to the success of the pilot project, four additional sites have been created in Roosevelt, Westbury, New Cassle, and Freeport. Four attorneys have been hired to cover them. The community prosecutors do not try cases. Their main responsibilities are community outreach and community-based programs, as well as prosecution of misdemeanor cases from their assigned locations that qualify to be heard in the Hempstead Community Court. They track cases that originate from their community and help trial attorneys assigned to those cases with preparation and community-generated intelligence about neighborhood issues.

The Nassau County District Attorney was primarily responsible for creating the community court, which opened in Hempstead on June 16, 1999. Court operations have expanded from 1 to 3 days per week, adjudicating misdemeanor-level quality-of-life crimes that originate from the five community prosecution sites. It is a disposition court modeled after a drug court, meaning that the offender must agree to plead guilty to

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<sup>61</sup>Information on Nassau County's community prosecution efforts is from an interview with Assistant District Attorney Rene Fiechter; the district attorney's newsletter, *Rising Star*, Volume II, Number II (2000); *Rising Star*, Office of the District Attorney, Nassau County (August, 1999); DA Newsletter, Community Crime Prevention Update (March 1998); and the web site, [www.nassauda.org](http://www.nassauda.org).

participate. The plea must be to the top count charged in the indictment, and the defendant is placed on probation for up to 1 year. Successful completion of the probationary terms and conditions may result in the withdrawal of the plea, with a conviction entered to a lower-level charge, or an outright dismissal of charges. Sanctions generally include community service. The court also offers many types of social services, including treatment programs for offenders with drug, alcohol, or mental health problems.

## **Knox County, Tennessee**

Tennessee Sixth District Attorney General Randy Nichols implemented a community prosecution program in Knox County in 1998.<sup>62</sup> His office employs 40 attorneys and has jurisdiction over misdemeanor and felony crimes occurring in Knox County. The county encompasses a mix of urban/inner-city, suburban, and rural areas and is characterized by a high degree of diversity. The population of approximately 360,000 is about 79-percent white, 20-percent black, and 2-percent Hispanic. Income levels are also diverse, ranging from high levels in the suburbs to an estimated 80 percent of inner-city families who are under the poverty level.

The office received a BJA enhancement grant in 2000 to hire an attorney and make improvements to a program that focuses on truancy. Truancy was selected as the target problem because research indicates that it is a precursor to crime, and also because it was repeatedly raised as an issue at meetings of various community organizations. The truancy program has been instituted countywide in more than 100 schools. The target population consists mainly of elementary and middle school children, with whom, it is believed, there is a better chance of effecting behavioral change than with high school children.

The school district defines truancy as 5 or more days of unexcused absence. When a student has been truant for 15 days or more, the district attorney becomes involved. The child and parents are notified that they must attend a Parental Responsibility Truancy meeting at the school, which is also attended by an assistant district attorney, the school superintendent, and representatives from social service agencies and the juvenile probation office. The child and parents are instructed on the implications of adult life without a high school diploma, as well as the possibility of criminal charges being brought against the parents (or the child, if he or she is over age 16) should the truancy continue. The grant was also used to add a second component to the program, a truancy review board consisting of representatives from the school, school psychologists, security staff, police, and social service providers. Should the truancy continue after the parental responsibility hearing, the family will be referred to a review board and assessed to determine whether services are needed to address problems that may underlie the truancy issue. There is followup to ensure that the parents follow through on any referrals that are made. If the child persists in being truant, a warrant will be filed requiring the parent and/or child to appear in court on a misdemeanor charge (punishable by up to 1 year in jail in the State of Tennessee). The parent may receive a sentence of up to 250 hours of community service

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<sup>62</sup>Information about the Knox County community prosecution program was obtained from interviews with Community Prosecution Coordinator Rhonda Garren.

and be placed on supervised probation for 1 year. Should a parent violate probation by allowing continued truancy, the parent may be detained in jail for 10 days.

Efforts to engage the community include a community advisory board that is currently being developed, which will include community residents who will provide guidance and advice on the truancy issue. The prosecutor's office will conduct a media campaign to promote parental awareness of the truancy issue and implement a truancy hotline, which citizens can call to report truants. An assistant district attorney has been hired to manage the program, with the assistance of a paralegal. The attorney will handle all court cases generated by the truancy initiative, facilitate the truancy review board, attend parental responsibility meetings, and generate program statistics. This attorney maintains an office in the juvenile courthouse and devotes all of her time to the truancy program.

The prosecutor also uses a truancy center, staffed by the police and social service agencies. Any children of school age found on the streets during school days are taken to the center. The parents are contacted, an assessment is made as to whether the child or his family is in need of services, and appropriate referrals are made.

## **Travis County (Austin), Texas**

In 1999, Travis County District Attorney Ronnie Earle created the Neighborhood DA Program, one of several community justice initiatives that include the Austin Community Court, community justice councils, neighborhood conference committees, and sentencing circles.<sup>63</sup> One attorney has been assigned to a pilot location in an urban area in Northeast Austin, which was experiencing problems with gangs, violent crime, and general disorder. The site is also a designated Weed and Seed location, so some community organizations were already in place.

The community prosecutor is assigned to a field office located in the police substation that is responsible for the Northeast site, which has helped to build a strong working relationship between the agencies. Community outreach consists mainly of attending community meetings several times per week to learn about local issues and seek citizen input on possible solutions to the problems. The attorney spends the majority of time in the community and is accessible to the residents. This attorney screens the cases that are generated in the Northeast community and carries a small load of felony-level quality-of-life cases (the district attorney does not have jurisdiction over misdemeanors). The trials division, through random case assignment, handles the majority of cases. Important cases that the community prosecutor cannot handle are flagged to alert the trial attorney to special issues or to provide neighborhood-generated intelligence. The community prosecutor is also available to sit as second chair on these cases or to help with trial preparation. The clerk of courts schedules cases on a random basis, which makes vertical or geographical prosecution impractical.

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<sup>63</sup>Information about Austin's community prosecution program comes from an interview with Meg Brooks, Assistant District Attorney; and from "Austin, Texas" on the Community Justice Exchange, Best Practices web page (at [www.communityjustice.org](http://www.communityjustice.org)).

Earle's office drafted the state law that created community justice councils. The councils' mission is to empower neighborhoods and citizens to create and maintain a safe community, and to increase public safety and reduce crime through working groups and committees of criminal justice officials, private citizens, and social service providers.

## West Palm Beach, Florida

Palm Beach County's Community-Based Anti-Crime Task Force (COMBAT) was implemented under State Attorney Barry Krischer.<sup>64</sup> It grew out of existing community-based initiatives in the Palm Beach County State Attorney's Office, most notably Weed and Seed, to which two prosecutors had been assigned. In July 1999, the program consolidated Weed and Seed and the Vice Department's narcotics nuisance abatement unit into a community prosecution program. Five attorneys are currently assigned to the program, along with one paralegal and a secretary. The attorneys are geographically assigned to specific areas within West Palm Beach, where they maintain field offices in addition to their offices in the main building. Attorneys are responsible for community outreach in their assigned districts and carry a reduced load of cases that are important to the community, ranging from major felonies to less serious crimes. Prosecutors work with the police on investigations, screen cases that originate in their district, and vertically prosecute the cases that are of priority to their community. Residents are encouraged to appear at sentencing hearings to give their input on the damage caused by defendants in these cases.

The neighborhoods that the program covers are mostly in the inner city, with a poor minority population. Many community outreach avenues were already set up through the Weed and Seed programs. As a result of the organizing that now takes place, residents in many areas have formed crime watch groups that patrol the streets at night to prevent drug dealers from doing their business. Attorneys are required to meet with residents in their neighborhoods, attend community meetings, and give talks when requested to do so. The attorneys also go out to schools and teach classes about the criminal justice system, something that had been required of all attorneys even before community prosecution. The community prosecution unit uses problem-solving strategies that include nuisance abatement and narcotics eviction. In one instance, the unit successfully closed a nuisance bar, which the city then bought and turned into a community center.

Community partners include the community police and a community court that also opened in summer 1999. The relationship between them is a positive one and the attorneys train the police on legal and procedural issues. The community has been receptive to the community court, which is responsive to issues of importance to them, processes cases in an expedited fashion, provides social services to defendants and residents alike, and requires defendants who commit quality-of-life offenses to pay something back to the community. The COMBAT unit coordinates all multiagency projects that require assistance from state and federal agencies. This has resulted in cooperative relationships

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<sup>64</sup>Information is from an interview and materials provided by Assistant State's Attorney James Martz, Chief of the Community-Based Anti-Crime Task Force.

among agencies, each with a single point of contact, which have gained enough credibility with one another to get an immediate response when one is needed.

## **Hennepin County (Minneapolis), Minnesota**

Hennepin County Attorney Amy Klobuchar created a community prosecution program in 1999 to ensure that the criminal justice system would be responsive and accountable to county residents by building stronger connections between the courtroom and the community.<sup>65</sup> The county has three community prosecution sites in racially and ethnically diverse residential areas, focused on addressing felony-level livability crimes including arson, burglary, and auto theft. These sites include the Third Police Precinct, where a full-time prosecutor works with local police and the community; the Fourth Precinct, where three prosecutors, including two juvenile prosecutors, handle problems that the community identifies as most serious; and Bloomington, where a full-time attorney handles all juvenile cases that arise there. The attorneys are located in field offices and carry a full caseload, which they prosecute vertically. Violent crimes are handled by the violent crimes section of the office and drug crimes are addressed at the drug court. In addition, attorneys act as liaisons with every law enforcement agency and school in the county.

In the Third Precinct, a community council of local stakeholders and neighborhood representatives provides insight into community concerns, encourages neighborhood participation in cases of community importance, and decides where community work squad projects should be done. The Fourth Precinct uses restorative justice principles through sentencing circles for minor juvenile crime, allowing the community to have a say in sanctions meted out to juvenile offenders and facilitating face-to-face meetings between victims and offenders. The office takes nuisance properties and felony-level damage done by graffiti seriously. The county also has a community court, which devotes separate days each week to hearing adult community prosecution cases from the Third and Fourth Precinct sites.

## **Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), Ohio**

Cuyahoga County encompasses the city of Cleveland, where approximately one-third of the county's 1.4 million residents are found, along with 60 percent of the crime. The County Prosecutor's Office employs 200 attorneys, has jurisdiction over felony cases, and represents city agencies in civil matters. The office shares responsibility for misdemeanor cases with the Municipal Prosecutor.

County Prosecutor William Mason created the Community-Based Prosecution (CBP) program in 1999.<sup>66</sup> The city of East Cleveland was selected as the target site because of its

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<sup>65</sup>Information about community prosecution in Hennepin County is from interviews with assistant county attorneys Martha Holton-Dimick, Ericka Mozangue, and Terri Froehlke and from materials found on the county attorney's web site, [www.hennepinattorney.org](http://www.hennepinattorney.org).

<sup>66</sup>Information about Cuyahoga County's Community-Based Prosecution Program was obtained from interviews with Assistant County Prosecutor Richard Neff.

high crime rate and low economic status, and because its mayor said that the city needed the program. A survey of residents and feedback from community meetings indicated that the community would be receptive to the prosecutor's help. Three attorneys were assigned, each to a specific category of crime—adult, juvenile, and gang related. In July 2000, two additional sites were opened in Cleveland, where two attorneys each were assigned to the First and Sixth Districts, because of a rising crime rate resulting from the displacement of crime caused by CBP in adjacent East Cleveland.

The CPB program is described as “law and order based” in the sense that its partnership with the police is of primary importance. Attorneys maintain field offices near police stations and have benefited from existing relationships with the community created by community policing. The attorneys are veteran prosecutors who maintain caseloads only slightly smaller than those of traditional trial attorneys, consisting of cases from their assigned areas that are of community concern. These cases are prosecuted vertically. Community cases that CBP attorneys are not able to handle are randomly assigned to felony trial attorneys, who are required to consult with the CBP supervisor for advice and approval of plea agreements. CBP attorneys are required to get out into their neighborhoods and attend community activities and meetings. Recognizing the difficulties of effectively and efficiently handling both of these duties, the prosecutor has hired community activists and neighborhood residents as outreach coordinators. They act as the eyes and ears of the attorneys in the community, supplementing their efforts by coordinating community-based activities and attending community meetings. Residents are engaged in CBP efforts through membership on the citizen advisory board and input from the board at community meetings. The board meets monthly to discuss quality-of-life issues and develop strategies to address them.

CBP collaborates with state and local agencies to meet residents' needs. The relationship between the prosecutor's office and the police, which had been strained, has been greatly improved by the interaction between the agencies that has resulted from CBP. Social service agencies have been drawn into the effort. Their representatives are stationed in neighborhood centers run by a nonprofit organization that provides services, such as mental health and family counseling, to community members who had difficulty accessing them. A partnership with school officials has created a truancy center and the Truancy Reduction Alliance to Contact Kids (TRACK) program. This effort combines personnel from the East Cleveland police department and the school district, social service providers from the Neighborhood Center, and parents to reduce truancy in the city. The center provides a convenient location for police officers to drop off truants that they find on the streets during school hours, where they are assessed to determine whether they need social services. School officials and parents are notified of the child's whereabouts, and parents are responsible for picking their children up and returning them to school. If a parent is unable to transport the student, center staff will deliver the child to the custody of a school official. TRACK also includes a diversion component for first-time offenders.

## **Brevard/Seminole County, Florida**

Brevard/Seminole County State's Attorney Norman Wolfinger, whose office has jurisdiction in misdemeanor, felony, civil public nuisance, and forfeiture cases, created the Neighborhood State Attorney Initiative (NSAI) in 1999.<sup>67</sup> Titusville was chosen as the pilot site for NSAI. The NSAI attorney is stationed in a field office along with representatives from most of the community and social service agencies. Services available there include a juvenile crime prevention/intervention program, an AIDS support program, independent living and mental health programs, and a food bank. Titusville is low income, urban, mostly residential, and has one of the county's highest crime rates. It is divided into three zones, one of which is the primary community prosecution focus. Titusville was chosen because it has its own court, with one judge who handles all felonies and one who handles all misdemeanors committed in the city. A chief committed to community justice leads the city's police department. A strong community structure was already in place, with active organizations that cared about the city. The community prosecution initiative targets quality-of-life issues such as blight, deteriorating housing, and code violations, which, together with the high crime rate, have contributed to the closing of many area businesses. One of the goals of community justice is to stimulate the economy and attract businesses back to the city.

Two other community prosecution sites are Altamonte Springs in Orlando, 15 to 20 miles outside of Disney World, and Palm Bay. Altamonte Springs has a high concentration of residential subdivisions and businesses in an urban setting. The target problems are mainly code violations and drug dealing. Palm Bay was a rural area that has recently begun a transformation to residential usage. New, low-cost, single-family housing developments have attracted residents from the North, but there is no infrastructure or sense of community. Although Palm Bay has 80,000 residents, only after years of bussing are schools being built to accommodate children within the neighborhood, which prosecutors believe is a factor in the area's primary issues of juvenile crime and gangs.

One attorney and one paralegal are stationed at each site. The role of the attorneys differs from site to site. They attend community meetings and engage community residents. They also take on as large a caseload of community impact cases as they can manage without compromising community outreach. Overflow cases are assigned to the trials division alphabetically and, except for Titusville, are randomly assigned to four judges at the centralized courthouse. Only specialized trial teams (sex crimes and career criminals) and the misdemeanor division prosecute cases vertically.

The role of the community is primarily advisory. Surveys were conducted at community activities to identify problems and receive input on possible solutions. Focus groups of residents, community leaders, and other area stakeholders such as private and nonprofit agencies and businesses were also used to identify problems and brainstorm solutions. Businessowners have been supportive, volunteering time and funds. Other community

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<sup>67</sup>Information about the Brevard/Seminole County State Attorney's Office NSAI was obtained from interviews and information provided by State Attorney Phil Archer.

partners include area police, the North Brevard Coalition of volunteers from social and human service agencies, and faith-based organizations.

## Montgomery County, Maryland

In 1991, Montgomery County State's Attorney Andrew Sonner created a community prosecution program to complement a new community policing program he had begun. The office was reorganized and the attorneys were divided into five teams, each assigned to one of the five police districts. Although this pilot effort ended about 1995, it served to pioneer the concept in Montgomery County. A new program was created in July 1999 by newly elected County State's Attorney Douglas Gansler, which again entailed restructuring the prosecutor's office on the basis of police districts.<sup>68</sup> All 59 attorneys in the office have been assigned geographically to cover the county's 5 police districts to address neighborhood crime more effectively.

Each trial team is staffed in proportion to the number of cases that arise from its district, and includes attorneys who specialize in juvenile crime, family violence, and economic crime. The attorneys are stationed in the central prosecutor's office. The objective was to have dedicated teams of prosecutors who were familiar with community problems and who had developed positive relationships with local police, residents, and other community stakeholders. Each team has a team captain who bears primary responsibility for community contact. Cases originating in the district are prosecuted by the team working in that district. All felony cases are prosecuted vertically. The community prosecutors work with police and community organizations to solve crime-related problems. They also work with every public and private school in the area. Community partners include police, sheriffs, schools, civic groups, faith-based organizations, chambers of commerce, apartment and property managers, and county attorneys.

The most recent BJA grant has been used to place three senior attorneys into the three busiest police districts to do more community problem solving and to use office resources more efficiently. They screen citizen complaints, which in Maryland account for approximately 50 percent of the criminal cases filed. An early screening process routes cases appropriately, diverting some to mediation or other alternative processing and removing those that do not belong in the system before time is wasted on them. The attorneys carry reduced caseloads of no more than five or six cases that are important to the neighborhood, enabling them to spend most of their time in the community. They meet weekly with members of their teams to keep them apprised of community issues and to be informed on the progress of cases.

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<sup>68</sup>Information on Montgomery County's community prosecution program is from an interview with Assistant State's Attorney Tom Eldridge; from "Community Prosecution-Implementation Grant Program Narrative," State's Attorney's Office, Montgomery County, Maryland, November 4, 1999; and from Jacoby, 1995: 299–300.

Programs operated through community prosecution include nuisance abatement and use a Maryland statute to shut down nuisance properties, especially drug houses. An elder abuse task force targets offenders who take financial or physical advantage of the county's elderly residents.

## **Sacramento County, California**

Sacramento County District Attorney Jan Scully created the community prosecution program in 2000.<sup>69</sup> Seven attorneys are assigned to field offices in six areas of the county. Most of the field offices are in community police posts, and many share a storefront office with code enforcement and probation officers.

Sacramento is an urban county with a racially and ethnically diverse population of approximately 1.2 million. The district attorney has jurisdiction over the city and county of Sacramento and handles felonies, misdemeanors and code enforcement litigation. The office also has civil jurisdiction, and is responsible for nuisance abatement and forfeiture matters.

The community prosecution attorneys attend community meetings, bring together community resources, and coordinate problem-solving efforts. The program uses only attorneys in its outreach efforts because officials believe it is important to send into the community personnel who have the power to make binding decisions and the ability to create strategies to deal with community issues. The attorneys vertically prosecute a reduced caseload of matters important to the community. Cases they cannot handle are assigned to the trials unit. Case files generated by the community prosecution unit contain tracking forms, requiring that the unit be updated on progress and outcomes, and provide special instructions on how community prosecutors and neighborhood residents would like the case handled.

Although target problems differ from one site to another, common to all are the rundown hotels that serve as apartments for the borderline homeless population. These hotels do not meet code standards and landlords have failed to make necessary repairs, despite the fact that the city pays them to house the homeless. The community prosecution unit is involved in efforts to shut these hotels down. Additional problems include prostitution, traffic, drug houses, and issues with the homeless. Some of the problems are addressed using nonlegal strategies, such as placing speed bumps in the road in areas with traffic issues and installing armrests on park benches to discourage the homeless from sleeping on them. An 8-hour training program has been developed for landlords of nuisance properties, which instructs them on landlord-tenant law, code enforcement, screening tenants, and spotting drug dealers. Landlords who have been successfully prosecuted for maintaining nuisance properties must attend the program as a condition of probation.

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<sup>69</sup>Information about the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office Community Prosecution Program was obtained from interviews with and information provided by Community Prosecution Chief Karen Maxwell.

Community prosecutors also solve problems through collaborative relationships with other agencies. The Nuisance Response Team, combining the efforts of agencies such as the California Highway Patrol, city council, and social service agencies, meets monthly to discuss community issues and plan joint responses.

The community is engaged in the community prosecution effort in several ways. Community forums are held to discuss specific crime problems, such as a nuisance property where a crime has occurred. The owner is invited to a forum where residents are given the opportunity to let the property owner know what impact his business has had on the community. The forums often result in “Good Neighbor Agreements,” informal contracts that summarize the responsibilities that the owner agrees to, as well as the role of the community and local agencies in ensuring compliance. Although not enforceable, these documents offer a clear understanding of what is expected of the property owner and pressures compliance to avoid further alienating the community. The attorneys are trained in mediation so that they can handle community forums. The prosecutor conducts periodic needs assessments to remain in touch with community issues and feelings about public safety. Surveys are distributed at community meetings and to neighborhood groups at least quarterly to stimulate feedback and generate the information that is used to set office priorities. The office also provides legal educational classes on gun violence for school children and organizes group meetings for adults on topics such as graffiti, school attendance, and vice crime.

## **Placer County, California**

In July 2000, Placer County District Attorney Bradford R. Fenocchio laid the groundwork for the Community and Agency Multidisciplinary Elder Team, a community prosecution effort to address elder abuse.<sup>70</sup> Elder abuse was chosen as the target problem because Placer County has a large (19 percent) and growing elder population (projected to reach 25 percent by 2040), and elder abuse crime has increased significantly in recent years. In 1997, Adult Protective Services opened 12 new cases of abuse per month, on average; by 1999, the number had increased to an average of 40 new cases per month. Because many nursing and assisted-living facilities and retirement communities are being located in Placer County, the office has had to respond to the escalating victimization of this population. Elder abuse is defined as crimes committed against individuals age 65 or older, and crimes against dependent adults ages 18 to 64, involving the infliction of pain or mental suffering, endangering health, and theft or embezzlement of property.

Placer County’s initiative involves a partnership of the prosecutor’s office with local police, residents, government agencies, the courts, judicial officers, victim advocates, and health-care providers. The program involves one assistant district attorney working out of the main office as a vertical prosecutor on all elder abuse cases throughout the county, and an investigator who is the program coordinator.

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<sup>70</sup>Information on Placer County’s community prosecution program is from an interview with and materials supplied by Assistant District Attorney Susan Gazzaniga.

The county plans to have this multidisciplinary team educate personnel from agencies that deal directly with the elder community on the causes of elder abuse, methods to prevent it, and the proper handling of abuse cases. In addition, the district attorney's office will develop a plan to increase community awareness of abuse issues, focusing community ties and involving community youth in the effort. Finally, the office seeks to enhance its own effectiveness in preventing, investigating, and prosecuting crimes against the elderly.

## **St. Joseph's County (South Bend), Indiana**

In August 2000, St. Joseph's County Prosecuting Attorney Christopher A. Toth started a community prosecution program in South Bend, Indiana.<sup>71</sup> There are three sites in the county, staffed by prosecutors who are stationed in new community justice centers that also serve as community meeting places. The program's nuisance abatement officer and a program coordinator move among the three sites. All of the sites have significant minority populations and are located in urban areas with both residential and commercial land use. After the sites were selected, the police chief adjusted his sectors to coincide with the sites. The target problem in each area is quality-of-life crime.

The attorneys' responsibilities include screening and charging cases filed by police for their areas and prosecuting a reduced load of cases that are most troublesome to the community. Overflow cases are randomly assigned to the trials division, which is separated into misdemeanor and felony units, and are prosecuted vertically. A small number of attorneys specialize in certain types of crimes and cases falling within their specialty are assigned mainly to them. Community prosecutors track cases that they do not handle personally and help prepare them for trial and sentencing.

The program engages the community through meetings of attorneys with community organizations and residents, and through the community justice teams in each site which includes businessowners. The teams meet monthly to help prosecutors identify community issues and develop strategies to respond to them. A large steering committee consisting of partners in the community prosecution effort initially helped set overall policy for community prosecution and continues to participate in problem-solving initiatives that tap into its members' areas of expertise.

The community prosecution unit runs a pretrial diversion program aimed at first-time misdemeanor offenders. Sanctions assigned to these offenders include community service, often performed for area nonprofit organizations that request workers at community justice meetings. Efforts are made to assign offenders to work sites in the areas where they committed their crimes or near their homes.

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<sup>71</sup>Information compiled on community prosecution in St. Joseph's County is from interviews with and materials provided by Assistant County Prosecutor Khadijah Muhammad, Project Codirector.

## Lackawanna County (Scranton), Pennsylvania

District Attorney Andrew Jarbola III initiated community prosecution in Lackawanna County in 2000.<sup>72</sup> Lackawanna is a largely urban county, populated primarily by low-income white and a growing percentage of Hispanic residents. Economic growth has slowed and many people have moved away to find better job opportunities.

The district attorney's office employs 26 assistant district attorneys, who handle misdemeanor and felony cases. Before the community prosecution program, the county operated an initiative called the School-Based Community Justice Program. An attorney was assigned to each of the county's 11 school districts to represent the district attorney's office at meetings of school officials, crime watch groups, community- and faith-based organizations, and social and human services representatives to discuss both general school issues and specific youth identified as being at risk. To combat the county's significant drug problems, the group implemented a countywide school drug policy. They also developed a program through which students volunteered to clean up trash in the community. The community prosecution program was created partly as a result of the positive impact of this program, and some of the assigned attorneys are now community prosecutors. Two attorneys are assigned to field offices in each of three sites.

To select the initial target sites and identify the issues of greatest importance to the community, surveys were distributed at community organization meetings, senior centers, and schools. The three targeted areas have the county's highest crime rates but also have fairly strong community organizations that care about the neighborhoods. An issue common to all three is absentee landlords. The Hill Section is mainly residential but is located near a college, where formerly single-family homes are being rented to college students who have no stake in the neighborhood. Poorly maintained buildings, trash, and low-level crime are principal issues for the neighborhood. The South Side site has seen an influx of Hispanic immigrants, many of whom do not speak English, creating a language barrier between them and city agencies. Only one police officer is fluent in Spanish. Housing is inadequate and many of the homes are poorly maintained rental properties with absentee landlords. Crime is primarily related to driving under the influence. A third site, Carbondale, has experienced an increase in drug-related criminal activity, mainly in properties owned by absentee landlords. A community action plan has been developed for each of the sites.

The role of the community prosecutors consists of community outreach and litigation of low-level, quality-of-life crimes, including third-degree misdemeanors and summary offenses. Overflow misdemeanor cases and felonies are assigned to trial teams, organized by major crime type.

The community is engaged primarily through criminal justice councils of residents chosen by the community to identify crime issues that the community wants addressed and to craft

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<sup>72</sup>Information about the Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office community prosecution program was obtained from interviews with Christine Tocki.

solutions. In addition, an advisory panel of community leaders, a state senator, representatives of human service agencies, and faith leaders meet annually to discuss the progress and goals of the project.

## **Westchester County, New York**

Westchester County District Attorney Jeanine Pirro began planning and implementing a community prosecution program in 2000 with a planning grant from BJA.<sup>73</sup> The target area selected was in Yonkers, an area with a significant minority population that includes both African Americans and Hispanics, and a combination of residential and commercial land use. The target problem is quality-of-life crime, primarily committed by youth. The area was experiencing difficulties with gang rivalries, drug-related crime, and prostitution. Another crime problem involves attacks on Hispanic day laborers, who are beaten and robbed of their day's pay. These victims are unlikely to turn to law enforcement for help. The district attorney is seeking a Weed and Seed designation as well as an implementation grant to help address the many issues in the area.

One of the factors that has been identified as contributing to youth issues is the lack of supervised afterschool and summer activities. The local Police Athletic League program is completely filled and part of the plan is to open a community center, where children can play and hang out, and where services can be offered. It is hoped that the center will provide a neutral zone where gang turf issues will not interfere. The community center is part of a 3-year plan focused on reducing neighborhood crime.

One attorney will be hired to implement the program, whose primary responsibilities will include community outreach and problem solving, in addition to carrying a small load of cases of community importance, which will be prosecuted vertically. The remainder of the misdemeanor cases will be assigned to trial attorneys in the Yonkers-based branch of the district attorney's office. Felonies will be randomly assigned to the felony trials unit in the main office, or to specific major crimes divisions according to crime type. The community prosecutor will maintain an office in the Yonkers branch.

Community partners will include community police, who have a relatively good relationship with the district attorney's office but have experienced some tensions with the community. The school district also must be a partner, although the district presently has an interim superintendent whose authority to make long-term decisions is limited. The district is acting under a long-standing desegregation order that stems from a 1980 lawsuit filed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The Yonkers population was effectively segregated, resulting in segregated schools that provided poor education for minority students. A combination of busing and housing programs aimed at integrating the community has created a more equitable situation. Thus, the schools have their own issues to deal with, but it is hoped that they will be able to collaborate with the district attorney's office to address community concerns. The community will be engaged

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<sup>73</sup>Information on community prosecution in Westchester County is from interviews with Community Justice Coordinator Yolanda Robinson and Assistant District Attorney Robert Maccarone.

in an advisory capacity, identifying issues and problems, and creating and participating in crime-solving strategies. Once the strategy is established, the community should be able to sustain the effort on its own.

## Oakland, California

The Oakland City Attorney's Office, under City Attorney John Russo, recently received a community prosecution grant to start a pilot program within its jurisdiction, which includes civil proceedings on behalf of Oakland.<sup>74</sup> Oakland is a relatively old city, and the community prosecution site contains many older homes, primarily tenant- rather than owner-occupied, as well as some commercial properties. The population is largely African American. The target area was selected for its poverty, high crime rate, prevalence of substandard housing, poorly maintained businesses, and graffiti.

In Oakland, the city attorney has primary responsibility for civil prosecutions, which will constitute an important element of the planned community prosecution strategy. Through a Weed and Seed grant, the city attorney has long played a vital role in community-based crime prevention strategies. The city attorney drafted both seizure and urban blight ordinances and prosecutes civil cases, such as drug nuisance actions, suits against landlords who own substandard housing, and suits against nuisance businesses such as liquor stores and hotels that permit prostitution on their premises. In conjunction with its management of Oakland's Weed and Seed efforts, the city attorney's office has collaborated with the Oakland Police Department to enforce nuisance abatement ordinances.

The city attorney makes effective use of Oakland's seizure ordinance, which permits vehicles that are used to purchase drugs or to solicit prostitutes to be declared a public nuisance. A criminal conviction is not necessary to have the property seized. This is done on the spot at the point of arrest. Seizures often are done through reverse sting operations, in which police decoys come into contact with those seeking to purchase illegal goods or services. Vehicles that are ultimately forfeited are sold to produce revenue for community projects. Even if the vehicles are not forfeited, the process generally takes a long time so the possibility of forfeiture can be a strong deterrent against the consumers of these illegal goods and services.<sup>75</sup>

The "blight" ordinance applies to abandoned or rundown residential, commercial, and industrial properties that attract illegal drug activity and prostitution. These properties are often located in or near residential areas and bring numerous citizen complaints. They contribute to urban blight, pose a public health risk, act as a magnet for crime, and can

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<sup>74</sup>Information on the Oakland community prosecution program is from a site visit and interviews with Paralegal Sandra Marion and Deputy City Attorney Charles E. Vose and a presentation at the National Community Prosecution Conference, sponsored by APRI, in September 2000.

<sup>75</sup>The seizure ordinance was challenged by the ACLU, but was upheld by the First District Court of Appeals. A petition is pending in the State Supreme Court but, if it is heard, agency officials believe that it will be upheld.

bring a neighborhood down quickly. A unit from the city attorney's office has been placed in the police department to deal exclusively with nuisance properties. Property owners are first notified that the city requires them to make repairs and that significant fines and fees will be assessed if they fail to comply. The ultimate remedy is closure of the property.

An example of successful use of the blight ordinance was a suit against a rundown hotel that charged \$400 a night and was frequented mainly by prostitutes. The rooms had no doors, the toilets did not work, and the halls were full of trash. The hotel was located in an otherwise fairly well-maintained neighborhood. The property owner was alerted to the conditions and compelled by the court to make repairs. A suit was filed under the blight ordinance and ultimately the property was closed down. After a closure is ordered, the property may be placed into receivership and a third party placed in control of the rehabilitation effort. If rehabilitation is possible at a reasonable cost, the property can be repaired and the owner will be assessed the cost of the repairs. If the owner fails to pay, the property may be sold.

The community prosecution program will be staffed by an attorney and a paralegal. The groundwork for the program was laid using a survey mailed to area residents that requested their views on neighborhood crime issues and information on problem locations. The survey was brief and anonymous to encourage residents to respond. Interns were sent into the neighborhood to retrieve completed surveys, supply new forms to residents who did not have them, and wait while they were filled out. The form contained a hotline number for anyone who had a specific problem or needed help. Of 1,500 forms distributed, approximately 300 have been returned.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000**

<b>Site</b>	<b><i>Manhattan, NY, 1985</i></b>	<b><i>Multnomah County, OR, 1990</i></b>	<b><i>Kings County, NY, 1991</i></b>	<b><i>Middlesex County, MA, 1991</i></b>
<b>Agency</b>	Community Affairs, New York County District Attorney's Office	Neighborhood DAs, Multnomah County District Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution, Kings County District Attorney's Office	Community Based Justice, Middlesex County District Attorney
<b>Target Problem</b>	Drug-related crime.	Quality-of-life crime.	Quality-of-life crime.	Violent juvenile crime and gangs.
<b>Target Area</b>	Business districts, inner city, urban.	Business districts, rural, suburban, urban (entire county).	Business districts, inner city, urban, (entire borough).	Rural, suburban, urban (entire county).
<b>Community Role</b>	Recipient of service, advisory role.	Advisory role, participants in problem solving and implementation.	Recipients of service, advisory role.	Recipients of service.
<b>Program Content</b>	Nuisance abatement, Narcotics Eviction and Trespass Affidavit programs, projects Focus and Octopus, school programs.	Drug-free zone, responsive problem solving.	Nuisance abatement, formal Trespass Affidavit Program, legal education programs for students and adults.	Community-based agencies share information about juveniles, collaborate on disposition, and provide needed services.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	Vertical prosecution by trial team.	NDAs rarely try cases; prosecutions by trial team.	Trial teams geographically assigned to zones, vertically prosecute cases.	Priority vertical prosecution of community-based justice (CBJ) cases by CBJ attorneys; trial teams are also geographically assigned and try cases from their areas.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Community police, housing authority and transit police, federal and local agencies.	Community court, community police, FBI, U.S. Attorneys, city attorneys, state and local agencies.	Community police, community court, schools.	School officials, police, probation, corrections, social services, local officials, and sometimes community leaders.
<b>Program Location</b>	Main office and one pilot office.	Field offices.	Main office.	Main office.
<b>Community Prosecutor's (CP) Office Organization</b>	Six general trial teams handle cases from all over the jurisdiction (randomly assigned), attorneys with expertise assigned to cases of community importance.	NDAs rarely process cases, but handle uncontested misdemeanors in community court; mainly involved in community outreach and problem solving	Trial attorneys and community affairs perform outreach in assigned zones.	CBJ attorneys try cases originating from their assigned area; in addition, collaborating with schools and agencies on juvenile issues.
<b>Staff</b>	Ten nonlawyers provide community outreach.	Seven attorneys, two legal assistants.	Trials division performs community outreach in assigned areas, seven nonlawyers and supervisor supplement community outreach.	Fifty attorneys.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Philadelphia, PA, 1992</i>	<i>Marion County, IN, 1993</i>	<i>Suffolk County, MA, 1993</i>	<i>Los Angeles, CA, 1993, 1996</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Public Nuisance Task Force, Philadelphia District Attorney's Office	Street Level Advocates (SLAs), Marion County Prosecutor's Office	Safe Neighborhood Initiative (SNI), Prosecutors in Police Stations, Suffolk County District Attorney	SAGE and CLEAR, Los Angeles County District Attorney
<b>Target Problem</b>	Nuisance properties.	Drug-related crime and public safety issues.	Violent crime.	Gang and drug crime, nuisance abatement.
<b>Target Area</b>	Inner city, urban.	Business districts, rural, suburban, urban.	Business districts, suburban, urban.	Inner city, urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Recipients of service, advisory role.	Advisory role, participant in problem solving.	Recipient of services, advisory role, some participation in problem solving.	Recipient of services, advisory role.
<b>Program Content</b>	Nuisance abatement.	Prostitution initiatives, nuisance abatement, narcotics eviction programs.	Juvenile programs: Operation Nightlight, CBJ.	Drug abatement, antiprostitution, school projects, public nuisance programs.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	CP attorneys try few cases from their assigned area; vertical prosecution by narcotics trial team for serious drug cases only.	SLAs screen and file charges for most felony cases, carry a small caseload, prosecuted vertically.	SNI and PIP attorneys handle many cases from their assigned areas utilizing vertical prosecution; cases not handled by SNI and PIP attorneys are assigned to the trial attorneys.	CLEAR attorneys carry full caseload, priority and vertical prosecution; SAGE attorneys screen cases, carry small caseload, advise police; trials division handles remaining cases by geographic assignment.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, liquor control board, health department, license and inspections, city attorneys.	Community police, community court, sheriff's department, government agencies.	Community police, attorney general's office, mayor's office.	Police, sheriffs, city attorneys, probation.
<b>Program Location</b>	Main office.	Staff stationed in police departments within site.	Neighborhood offices and police districts.	Field offices.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Attorneys involved mainly in outreach and civil nuisance litigation.	CP attorneys try few cases, main responsibility is to handle community outreach and problem solving, advise police.	Attorneys split time between litigation, community outreach, advising police.	SAGE attorneys primarily involved in problem solving, training police, and drafting legislation; CLEAR attorneys primarily focus on prosecuting violating offenders, intervention, and prevention programs.
<b>Staff</b>	Six attorneys.	Six attorneys, four paralegals, one investigator, nuisance abatement coordinator.	Six SNI attorneys, three PIP attorneys, four nonattorney staff persons, community affairs chief.	Eighteen CLEAR attorneys (six city attorneys handle misdemeanors), five SAGE attorneys.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Seattle, WA, 1995</b>	<b>Howard County, MD, 1996</b>	<b>Plymouth County, MA, 1996</b>	<b>Washington, DC, 1996</b>
<b>Agency</b>	Precinct Liaison Program, Seattle City Attorney's Office	The Community Justice Program, Howard County State Attorney	Safe Neighborhood Initiative, State Attorney General and Plymouth County District Attorney	Community Prosecution, Major Crimes Section, US Attorney's Office
<b>Target Problem</b>	Quality-of-life crime, nuisance properties.	Quality-of-life crime, especially youth issues.	Gang and drug crime.	Major crime and nuisance properties.
<b>Target Area</b>	Urban.	Rural, suburban, urban (entire county).	Urban.	Commercial, urban (entire city).
<b>Community Role</b>	Advisory.	Recipient of services, advisory role, participant in problem solving.	Recipient of services, advisory role.	Recipient of services, advisory role.
<b>Program Content</b>	Good neighbor agreements, neighborhood action team.	Initiatives to respond to problems are created as needed, Hot Spot Program.	Abandoned housing project, landlord training and notification letters, and juvenile outreach.	Drug abatement, antiprostitution, school projects and public nuisance programs.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	Some CP attorneys try cases, most litigation handled by trials division and civil unit.	One attorney designated liaison for each county district, carries full caseload, not necessarily from assigned district, priority prosecution-selected misdemeanors, vertical prosecutions of felonies, Hot Spot attorney assigned to highest crime area.	SNI attorneys carry caseload of targeted felony and misdemeanor cases of interest to the community, utilizing priority prosecution-expedited case processing, remaining cases tried by trial attorneys.	Six teams of attorneys geographically assigned to the seven police districts, and dedicated attorneys in the misdemeanor and narcotics divisions try cases vertically; Grand Jury/intake units, assigned geographically, screen cases.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, social and human service agencies, department of corrections.	Police, Department of Juvenile Justice, parole and probation, social service agencies, schools, governor's office.	Attorney general's office, state and local police, Boys & Girls Clubs, mayor's office, community and government officials.	Community police, federal and local agencies, private attorneys.
<b>Program Location</b>	Field offices.	Main office.	Main office.	Attorneys in main office, community outreach specialists stationed in police districts.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Two CP attorneys do not try cases, perform outreach, and act as liaison between community and trial attorney; two CP attorneys carry full caseload from assigned area and perform outreach.	Entire staff of attorneys involved in community outreach and litigate cases; cases randomly assigned, felonies prosecuted vertically; Hot Spot attorney primarily involved in outreach, carries reduced caseload.	SNI attorneys carry full caseload, perform community outreach, and administer problem-solving programs.	Community outreach specialists handle nontraditional problems; civil division handles nuisance issues.
<b>Staff</b>	Four attorneys.	Entire office, 23 full-time and 2 part-time attorneys, involved in CP, 1 Hot Spot attorney.	Two assistant attorneys general, two assistant district attorneys.	Seven community outreach specialists, six trial teams, and Grand Jury/intake teams, all geographically assigned; dedicated misdemeanor and narcotics attorneys, Nuisance Task Force.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Denver, CO, 1996</i>	<i>Erie County, NY, 1996</i>	<i>City of Phoenix, AZ, 1996</i>	<i>Santa Clara County, CA, 1996–1997</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Community Prosecution Program, Denver District Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution, Erie County District Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution, Phoenix City Prosecutor	Community Prosecution Program, Santa Clara District Attorney's Office
<b>Target Problem</b>	Quality-of-life crime.	Quality-of-life misdemeanors.	Quality-of-life misdemeanors, urban blight.	Quality-of-life crime.
<b>Target Area</b>	Urban.	Residential, urban.	Residential, urban.	Commercial, suburban, urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Core participants in problem solving.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.	Advisory, participant in problem solving.
<b>Program Content</b>	Community justice councils, community accountability boards, community safety forums.	Prostitution task force, nuisance abatement.	Prostitution initiatives, nuisance abatement.	Operation Spotlight, restorative justice, community justice centers.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	Attorneys assigned to CP are also assigned to a major crimes unit; they carry a full caseload in their specialized areas, but cases are <i>not</i> geographically assigned.	CP attorney will prosecute selected but substantial caseload of cases important to community, overflow cases randomly assigned to trials division.	CP attorneys try selected cases of community importance, most litigation handled by trials division: criminal cases prosecuted vertically, civil cases randomly assigned.	CPs rarely try cases, primary focus is outreach and problem solving.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Community police, city attorneys, liquor licensing, nuisance abatement, Mayor's Office of Employment and Training, drug court.	Police, corporate council, Office of Community Development.	Neighborhood services, police, health department, housing and planning department, fire department.	Community police, local law enforcement and social service agencies, probation department.
<b>Program Location</b>	Attorneys in main office, community justice advocates located in their assigned neighborhoods.	Main office.	Field offices.	Attorneys split time between main office and field office.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Community outreach mainly handled by nonattorney employees.	CP attorneys main responsibility is community outreach and problem solving.	CP attorneys main responsibility is community outreach and problem solving.	CPs main responsibility is outreach and problem solving, also act as liaisons between community and trial attorneys who handle cases of concern to the neighborhood.
<b>Staff</b>	Director, community justice coordinator, neighborhood justice coordinator, three community justice advocates, eight attorneys, and CAB coordinators (who must reside in the community).	Two attorneys.	Two attorneys.	Seven attorneys.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Pima County, AZ, 1997</i>	<i>Jackson County, MO, 1997</i>	<i>Honolulu, HI, 1997</i>	<i>City of San Diego, CA, 1997</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Community Prosecution Unit, Pima County Attorney's Office	Neighborhood Justice Team, Jackson County Prosecutor's Office	Community Prosecution Program, Department of the Prosecuting Attorney for the City and County of Honolulu	Neighborhood Prosecution Unit, San Diego City Attorney's Office
<b>Target Problem</b>	Quality-of-life crime, nuisance properties.	Quality-of-life crime, drug related crime, nuisance properties.	Quality-of-life crime.	Quality-of-life, drug crime.
<b>Target Area</b>	Commercial, residential, suburban, urban.	Rural, suburban, urban.	Business district, suburban, urban.	Urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Advisory, participant in problem solving.	Advisory role, participant in problem solving.	Recipient of services, advisory, participant in problem solving.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.
<b>Program Content</b>	Nuisance property eviction programs, Operation Spotlight.	Child abuse, truancy, nuisance abatement.	Antiprostitution initiatives, youth antiviolence and prevention, school-based programs.	Prostitution task force, Community Safety Initiative, community service centers.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	CPs do not try cases; felony cases randomly assigned to trials division, divided into major crimes, by crime type; misdemeanor cases handled by the city attorney community prosecutor.	Attorneys carry reduced caseload consisting in cases of community importance, originating from their assigned areas, trials division handles overflow cases.	CPs litigate most serious cases and cases of community priority vertically—each handles specialty cases, not necessarily for their assigned area, trials division, organized according to crime type, handles overflow cases.	CP attorneys vertically prosecute reduced caseload of importance to assigned community, trials division handles overflow cases, CP attorney acts as liaison.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, probation, attorney general's office, city attorney.	Local, state, and federal agencies and prosecutors; probation and parole; drug court; area businesses.	Community police, community court, drug court, federal prosecutors, juvenile probation, schools.	Police, social and human services, school district representatives.
<b>Program Location</b>	Attorney maintains office space in main office, spends majority of time in field office.	Attorneys split time between main office and field office.	Main office.	Field offices.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Does not try cases, primary focus is outreach and problem solving, some civil litigation.	CP attorneys' main responsibility is community outreach and problem solving.	CPs try many cases, CP attorneys are each assigned geographic area for outreach but try cases from all three areas.	CP attorneys primarily involved in community outreach and administering problem-solving programs.
<b>Staff</b>	One full-time and one part-time attorney.	Six attorneys.	Three attorneys.	Four attorneys.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Kalamazoo County, MI, 1998</i>	<i>Cook County, IL, 1998</i>	<i>Nassau County, NY, 1998</i>	<i>Knox County, TN, 1998</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Neighborhood Prosecuting Attorney Program, Kalamazoo County Prosecuting Attorney	Community Prosecution Program, Cook County State Attorney	Community Crime Prevention, Nassau County District Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution Program, Knox County District Attorney General's Office
<b>Target Problem</b>	Quality-of-life crime.	Quality-of-life crime.	Quality-of-life crime.	Truancy.
<b>Target Area</b>	Commercial, residential, urban.	Commercial, residential, suburban, urban.	Suburban, urban.	Suburban, rural, urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Recipient of services, advisory role, participant in problem solving.	Advisory role, participant in problem solving.	Advisory role, participate in problem solving.	Advisory.
<b>Program Content</b>	Truancy and curfew programs, nuisance property programs.	Summer Opportunity Program for kids; hate crimes unit.	Rising Star, trespass/eviction.	Truancy review board and center.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	Neighborhood prosecutors carry small caseload of cases important to the community, prosecuted vertically, majority of cases litigated by trial teams.	CPs vertically prosecute a substantial caseload important to their assigned community, track cases, and advise trial attorneys on overflow cases.	CPs handle misdemeanors from their sites in community court, trial attorneys try CP cases with input and guidance from community prosecutors.	CP attorney handles all matters related to truancy, trials division continues to handle traditional litigation.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Community police, city agencies, Boys & Girl's Clubs.	City services, local officials, city attorney, police, parks authority, school board, social services.	Boys & Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Sisters, police, schools, social services, local officials, community court.	Police, schools, social and human service agencies.
<b>Program Location</b>	Field office.	Field office.	Main offices.	Juvenile courthouse.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Neighborhood prosecutors focus on community outreach.	CPs divide time between litigation, community outreach, and problem solving.	CP attorneys primarily responsible for outreach and administering community-based programs.	CP attorneys primarily concerned with truancy issues.
<b>Staff</b>	Two attorneys.	Eleven attorneys, including two supervisors and prevention coordinator.	Five attorneys.	One attorney, one paralegal.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Travis County, TX, 1999</i>	<i>West Palm Beach, FL, 1999</i>	<i>Hennepin County, MN, 1999</i>	<i>Montgomery County, MD, 1999</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Neighborhood DA program, Travis County District Attorney	COMBAT, Palm Beach State Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution, Hennepin County Attorney	Community Prosecution, Montgomery County State's Attorney
<b>Target Problem</b>	Felony level quality-of-life cases.	Drug- and vice-related crime.	Felony level "livability" offenses, juvenile crime.	Neighborhood crime.
<b>Target Area</b>	Urban.	Inner city, urban.	Residential, urban.	Entire county.
<b>Community Role</b>	Advisory role, participate in problem solving.	Advisory role, participate in problem solving.	Advisory role, participate in problem solving.	Advisory role.
<b>Program Content</b>	Community justice councils.	Nuisance abatement, narcotics eviction, legal education and mentoring programs in the schools.	Restorative justice, nuisance abatement.	Nuisance abatement, Elder Abuse Task Force.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	Neighborhood DA screens cases from assigned area; prosecutes small caseload of cases important to the community; tracks and provides assistance upon request of trial attorney for majority of cases.	COMBAT attorneys vertically prosecute a reduced caseload of cases important to their assigned community; major crimes trial unit tries overflow cases with input from CP attorneys.	CPs vertically prosecute a full caseload originating from their districts, except violent and drug-crime cases, which are handled by specialty trial attorneys.	Trials division geographically assigned to prosecute all cases originating from their districts; felony cases prosecuted vertically, responsible for community outreach.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, social service providers, law enforcement officials.	Community police, community court, state and federal agencies, schools.	State and local law enforcement and social service agencies, schools, community court.	Police, sheriffs, schools, civic groups, faith-based organizations, chambers of commerce, apartment and property managers, and county attorneys.
<b>Program Location</b>	Field office.	Field office and main office.	Field office.	Three senior attorneys assigned to field offices, remaining attorneys assigned to main office.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	Trial attorneys are randomly assigned to try CP cases with input from CP; CP attorney screens cases from her area, acts as liaison to trial attorney, primary focus is outreach.	CP attorneys litigate, participate in police investigation, screen community cases, and perform outreach and problem solving.	CP attorneys divide time between litigation and community outreach.	Senior attorneys carry reduced caseload, screen cases, responsible for more community outreach.
<b>Staff</b>	One attorney.	Five attorneys, one paralegal, one secretary.	Four attorneys; attorneys divide time between litigation and community outreach.	Fifty-nine attorneys.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<b>Site</b>	<b><i>Brevard/Seminole County, FL, 1999</i></b>	<b><i>Cuyahoga County, OH, 1999</i></b>	<b><i>Westchester County, NY, 2000</i></b>	<b><i>Oakland, CA, 2000</i></b>
<b>Agency</b>	Neighborhood State Attorney Initiative, Florida State Attorney's Office	Community-Based Prosecution, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office	Community Prosecution, Westchester County District Attorney's Office	Community prosecution, Oakland City Attorney's Office
<b>Target Problem</b>	Quality-of-life, urban blight, drug crime, juvenile issues.	Quality-of-life, juvenile issues.	Quality-of-life crime, focus on youthful offenders.	Nuisance properties, urban blight.
<b>Target Area</b>	Residential, rural, urban.	Urban.	Commercial, residential, suburban, urban.	Commercial, residential, urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Advisory.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.	Advisory role, participate in problem solving.	Advisory role.
<b>Program Content</b>	Problem solving.	Neighborhood centers, truancy center.	Youth programs.	Nuisance abatement.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	CP attorneys primarily handle outreach, may carry caseload of community impact cases, most litigation handled by trials division, felonies assigned randomly.	CP attorneys carry slightly reduced caseload, prosecute vertically, overflow cases assigned randomly to trials division, must consult with CP attorneys for advice on CP cases and approval of plea agreement.	CP attorney will vertically prosecute selected cases of community importance, overflow cases assigned to trials divisions.	CP attorney to file civil suits on behalf of assigned neighborhood, county district attorney has jurisdiction over all criminal cases.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, coalition group of volunteer social and human services and faith based organization representatives.	Police, social and human services, state and local agencies, school officials.	Community police, schools, social service agencies.	Police, county district attorney.
<b>Program Location</b>	Field offices.	Field offices.	Branch office.	Main office.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	CP attorneys mainly responsible for community outreach and problem solving, focus on identifying major crime issues.	CP attorneys primarily concerned with outreach, assisted by nonattorney outreach coordinators.	Primary responsibility community outreach and problem solving.	CP attorney primarily responsible for civil litigation and coordination of problem-solving efforts.
<b>Staff</b>	Three attorneys, three paralegals.	Six attorneys.	One coordinator, one attorney to be assigned.	One attorney, one paralegal.

**Table 3: Highlights of 36 Community Prosecution Initiatives in the United States, 1985–2000 (continued)**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Lackawanna County, PA, 2000</i>	<i>Placer County, CA, 2000</i>	<i>Sacramento County, CA, 2000</i>	<i>St. Joseph's County, IN, 2000</i>
<b>Agency</b>	Community Prosecution Program, Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office	Community and Agency Multidisciplinary Elder Team, Placer County District Attorney	Community Prosecution, Sacramento County District Attorney's Office	Community Prosecution, Prosecuting Attorney, St. Joseph's County
<b>Target Problem</b>	Poorly maintained buildings/absentee landlords, drug crime.	Elder abuse.	Poorly maintained hotels, quality-of-life crime, drug crime.	Quality-of-life crime.
<b>Target Area</b>	Urban, rural.	Entire county.	Urban.	Commercial, residential, urban.
<b>Community Role</b>	Advisory, participate in problem solving.	Advisory.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.	Advisory, participate in problem solving.
<b>Program Content</b>	Criminal justice councils, community advisory panel, school-based justice program.	Collaborative community education and prevention program.	Good neighbor agreements, community forums, legal education classes for the community.	Pretrial diversion, responsive problem solving.
<b>Case Processing Adaptations</b>	CP attorneys carry reduced caseload consisting of low level crime arising from their assigned communities, overflow cases assigned to trials teams.	CP attorney vertically prosecutes all cases of elder abuse.	CP attorneys vertically prosecute reduced caseload from assigned neighborhood, overflow cases assigned to trials division, must provide updates to CP attorneys on CP cases and instructions about cases are included in each file.	CP attorneys screen and charge cases from their areas; vertically prosecute reduced caseload of cases important to the community.
<b>Collaborating Partners</b>	Police, HUD, schools, social and human service agencies.	Police, mental health, public guardian, adult protective services, health care providers, probation.	Police, city council, social and human services agencies.	Area businesspeople, police, hospitals, health department, housing authority, probation, school authorities, mayor's office.
<b>Program Location</b>	Field offices and main office split time.	Main office.	Field offices.	Field offices.
<b>CP Office Organization</b>	CP attorneys perform outreach and handle limited low-level litigation.	Not applicable.	CP attorneys primarily involved in community outreach and administering problem-solving programs.	Trial division tries majority of cases from CP sites with input and assistance from CP attorneys.
<b>Staff</b>	Six attorneys.	One attorney, one investigator.	Six attorneys.	Three attorneys, one nuisance abatement officer, one program director.



# Community Prosecution: Thinking About Evaluation

The problem of measuring the impact of community prosecution—particularly given its diverse adaptations—begins with an understanding of what that innovation is (and what it is not) and what it proposes to accomplish in its own terms. In the earlier chapters of this report, we have traced the origins of community prosecution strategies, identified key dimensions in a working typology that permits classification of diverse approaches, and highlighted the attributes of existing community prosecution initiatives to illustrate the scope of the movement today. It is clear from these discussions that the community prosecution model represents a philosophy as well as an innovation. The shared philosophy seeks to connect the prosecution function more directly with the community, to develop a new and more collaborative working relationship, and to be more responsive to the crime-related concerns of communities. The form this idea takes varies considerably from location to location and from prosecutor to prosecutor along the dimensions we have outlined in the working typology of community prosecution strategies.

Many of the elements of community prosecution—dispersion of attorneys to different geographic locations, vertical prosecution, organization of case assignment to reflect the geography of the community, considerably more time spent interacting with the community—represent notable departures from traditional modes of functioning. They reflect the level at which a prosecutor’s office commits to the philosophy and raise difficult questions about impact and resource allocation. Prosecutors who lead such efforts and their funding sources have begun to demand evaluation of whether and how community prosecution “works.” The challenges for research in measuring the effects of community prosecution, its strengths and weaknesses, are commensurate with the challenges posed by community-oriented strategies to traditional prosecution functions.

## A Conceptual Framework for Evaluating Community Prosecution

Table 4 proposes a multidimensional framework for conceptualizing community prosecution evaluation measures that recognizes the distinct and joint roles played by the prosecution and the community. It defines areas of impact based on the key dimensions in the typology shared by community prosecution initiatives across the nation. In addition, the framework differentiates between measures appropriate for assessing the implementation of community prosecution and measures reflecting outcomes or the impact of community prosecution programs, once they have been effectively implemented.

**Table 4: Conceptualizing Measures of Community Prosecution Impact**

<i>Key Dimensions</i>	<b>Elements of Community Prosecution Innovation</b>		
	<b>Prosecution Function</b>	<b>Community Role</b>	<b>Interaction of Both</b>
<b>Target Problems</b>			
<i>Implementation</i>	Types/number of problems identified.	Input in defining problems and designing strategies.	Collaboration in identifying and addressing problems.
	Strategies implemented to address.	Participation in implementing strategies.	
<i>Outcomes</i>	Outcomes per problem area.	Community improvement. Accountability. Community satisfaction/ownership with outcomes.	Problems successfully addressed.
<b>Target Area</b>			
<i>Implementation</i>	Services, actions added per geographic areas.	Cooperation and assistance.	Defining, agreeing to area.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Improved measures of targeted problems in geographic areas.	Improved working relationship.	
<b>Role of Community</b>			
<i>Implementation</i>	Types/methods/frequency of involvement.	Types/method/frequency of involvement.	Access to government and policy formulation.
	Problems identified. Suggested strategies.	Community access. Suggested strategies.	
<i>Outcomes</i>	Improved community links.	Improved community access/participation.	More effective communication on crime and related problems.
	Improved satisfaction. Better impact on targeted problems.	Improved satisfaction. Impact on targeted areas. Improved accountability.	Ownership.
<b>Content of Community Prosecution Strategy</b>			
<i>Implementation</i>	Specific programs, components, services instituted.	Specific role, cooperation, participant, and recipient of services.	Project-specific functions.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Impact of specific programs (youth, drugs, graffiti, nuisance, prostitution, etc.).	Community view of impact and success.	Measure of success and impact.

**Table 4: Conceptualizing Measures of Community Prosecution Impact (continued)**

<i>Key Dimensions</i>	<b>Elements of Community Prosecution Innovation</b>		
	<b>Prosecution Function</b>	<b>Community Role</b>	<b>Interaction of Both</b>
<b>Organization of Prosecution</b> <i>Implementation</i>	Geographic assignment.  Reorganization. New procedures/staff, assessment/values.  New programs.	Organization and representation. Areas/neighborhoods. Access to prosecutor/ other agencies/ resources.	New partnerships.  Improved prosecution.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Office effectiveness, efficiency.  Relative costs. Culture change/ acceptance. Impact of new procedures. Improved reputation.	Effectiveness of procedures for participation.	New procedures for collaboration.
<b>Prosecutor Workload</b> <i>Implementation</i>	Content of workday/ lawyer. Contact with community/outreach. Identification of problem areas. Litigation/vertical.		
<i>Outcomes</i>	Community contacts. Problems identified. Strategies decided. Matters addressed/type. Resolutions/cases/types. Staff satisfaction.		
<b>Collaboration/ Partnerships</b> <i>Implementation</i>	New working relations with agencies and organizations. Expanded planning. Added multiagency services.	New overall working relationship.	New planning, problem-solving role.
<i>Outcomes</i>	Impact of collaboration on services and outcomes/problems.		Routinization and growth of relationship.

## **Identifying the Roles of the Prosecutor and the Community**

The evaluation framework incorporates separate as well as joint consideration for the roles of the prosecutor and the community. As we have understood the movement, community prosecution cannot be grasped as an in-house reorganization plan, for example, that is strictly limited to what the prosecutor does to or for the community. Instead, the concept suggests a new working relationship between prosecutor and community that takes many forms in the different sites, but does not merely amount to better prosecutor-public relations. Because the community prosecution concept itself suggests new goals, roles, and desired outcomes for both prosecutor and community, measurement of the impact of community prosecution needs to take both critical components into account. One of the challenges for evaluation is that the community and prosecution roles in community prosecution strategies are viewed both as agents of change (the community prosecution innovation being implemented) and the targets of change (as they are transformed by the innovation into a new justice function).

## **Using the Typology To Organize Evaluation Questions**

The separate and joint roles of prosecutor and community are examined in this evaluation framework on each of the key dimensions of community prosecution strategies outlined in table 2. In the earlier discussion of the key ingredients of these strategies, the purpose of the typology was descriptive, to characterize diverse initiatives according to common themes or functional components. In table 4, the purpose is different. The descriptive elements of the typology help establish categories of presumed impact that measures of community prosecution should tap, taking into account the parts played by prosecutor and community.

## **Distinguishing Between (Early-Stage) Implementation and Outcome Questions**

The evaluation framework illustrated in table 4 builds in one other important dimension. It divides impact measures into implementation and outcome categories. The distinction is important for two reasons. First, it is difficult to gauge the impact of an innovation if it is not implemented. Thus, the first type of evaluation measure we propose measures the extent of implementation. By this, we mean that when a community prosecution initiative promises to introduce certain services or procedures in specific areas to accomplish certain effects (crime reduction, fear reduction, improved civility), a first task of evaluation is to measure the extent to which these services or procedures were put into place.

Second, because many community prosecution programs are young and evolving, evaluation should consider a program's maturity or stage of development. A program in its first year would not expect to produce the same measurable results as a program completing its third year of operation. In the younger program, evaluation questions would logically focus more on measuring the extent to which the promised innovation has indeed been implemented, services delivered, and changes made. In the older program, after

implementation of the innovation elements is confirmed, evaluation could more reasonably examine the impact of new actions, services, or procedures. In short, evaluation of community prosecution needs to examine its success in implementation, as well as the results the program produces once effectively implemented. Stated another way, it is not possible to assess the impact of community prosecution if it has not been well implemented.

## **Target Problems**

By way of illustration, table 4 suggests that an assessment of community prosecution focusing on the role of the prosecutor would seek to identify the types of problems targeted by the initiative and the strategies that are formulated to address them. The prosecutor would want to measure impact in each of the target areas, particularly relating to the prosecution function. Implementation measures would also focus on the role of the community in defining target problems and measure the extent of participation or collaboration that produced agreements. Outcome measures would focus on community improvement and increased community satisfaction in specific areas, and would hold the community prosecution initiative accountable for the goals it promised.

## **Target Area**

Because community prosecution initiatives target specific geographic areas, implementation measures related to the prosecution role would examine the extent to which new services, procedures, or activities were set in place in the target areas. This would include the extent to which representatives of the community in specific areas participated in those strategies and became involved in a new way. Because community prosecution initiatives focus on particular parts of a jurisdiction, measures of program impact have to be organized by geographic area (in an “impact per area” measurement). Thus, community prosecution aims such as reducing prostitution or disturbances associated with nuisance establishments would be measured per targeted geographic area. This geographic dimension calls for new measures and new uses of available data, such as police calls for service, arrests, frequency of patrol, graffiti, or other relevant observation measures that can help evaluation frame results by geographic area.

## **Role of the Community**

The community role in community prosecution is to be both an agent of change and a target of change, an impact that can be measured. The innovation proposes to involve the community to bring about better community conditions, but also promises to change the role of the community as a result of the strategy—making measuring impact a little confusing. A measure of community prosecution implementation would examine how the community role was defined and brought into play, how the prosecution encouraged the new role, and how the community responded. New procedures put into place might also be considered outcomes or accomplishments of the strategy. Thus, evaluation should characterize the new community-prosecutor problem-identification and problem-solving

process as both an implementation and an outcome question as the new working relationship becomes institutionalized, and an “effect” as well as a cause. The community should experience measurable results, ranging from increased satisfaction with the prosecution function to perceived positive results in targeted problem areas.

## **Content of Community Prosecution Strategy**

Most sites include various functions under the heading of their community prosecution initiative, depending on the type of problems the initiative addresses. The list of specific programs or activities sponsored by the sites is long and highly individualistic, ranging from juvenile intervention programs, to targeting drug offenders, to eliminating nuisance establishments and addressing housing problems. An evaluation framework will need to examine the impact of these programmatic elements of site community prosecution strategies, again from both implementation and outcome perspectives. Assessment should measure how well the specific programs were put into operation (implementation) as well as the extent to which they brought about desired results (outcome)—both from a prosecution and community perspective. In this category as in others, measuring successful prosecutions may or may not be relevant to the full scope of the activities put in place and the objectives pursued through the particular programs.

## **Organization of Prosecution**

Depending on its form, community prosecution may involve significant changes in the way prosecutor’s offices are organized. As an implementation measure, evaluation would examine the extent to which the strategy resulted in changes in office organization and function. Some offices have reorganized minimally, instituting a special unit to carry out community prosecution functions, while others have restructured their offices and workloads along geographic lines—some with offices in satellite locations, some covering geographic assignments from a central office. How well these changes are put into place is an implementation question. How this is accomplished with community involvement—for example, linked with community councils or other organizations—is also an implementation stage concern. After the new organization and procedures are in place, evaluation can address their impact in the targeted areas and their effects on the operation of the prosecutor’s office and on its relationship with the community.

## **Prosecutor Workload**

Some advocates of community prosecution have argued that, taken at its most challenging, adoption of community prosecution represents a change in the “culture” of prosecution. Whether or not this proves to be so is one of the fundamental research questions about the impact of community prosecution. In their implementation stage, community prosecution initiatives change what prosecutors do. Depending on the model, the prosecutor may spend more time in the community meeting and problem solving and less time in court. When in court, the prosecutor may specialize in certain types of cases (some even involving civil actions) or in various cases selected because of their importance to the target location. In

some locations, the community prosecutor may serve more as a legal facilitator than as the actual attorney in all cases.

The new or nontraditional workload of the community prosecutor will require other measures than those normally employed to evaluate attorney performance in the office. In addition to successful outcomes in the cases that do go to court, measures of impact can include the number of community contacts made, and the number and type of matters addressed and resolved, many using other means than the criminal process. Evaluation research would also examine the impact on the prosecutor's office of the institution of a community prosecution function, measuring the extent to which the overall office workload has been affected, and the use and allocation of resources. Adoption of a new prosecutor role also raises questions about professional satisfaction and career advancement for staff who accept such assignments. One of the chief difficulties confronted by community policing initiatives has been acceptance of the new function by other police officers. In a parallel way, a measure of the impact of community prosecution should include assessment of the perspectives of other prosecutors on the new specialty. To the extent that the community prosecutor is not viewed as a "real" prosecutor, good candidates will not pursue such assignments without concern for career advancement.

## **Collaboration and Partnerships in Identifying Problems and Effecting Solutions**

In many of the community prosecution sites highlighted above, the prosecutor has worked with community organizations to address crime-related, quality-of-life problems through approaches involving multiagency collaboration and partnerships with agencies such as housing and licensing, streets, police, and schools. The nature and type of partnerships brought about through community prosecution represent measures of an important dimension of the innovation. The results of those collaborative strategies, services, or special actions are outcome measures relating to problem resolution that would not have been possible without community prosecution.



## Conclusion

This report has traced the origins of community prosecution as a component of the evolving role of the prosecutor and the prosecutor's need to deal more directly with the crime-related problems of specific communities. At the same time, community prosecution represents another element in the growing repertoire of community justice initiatives responding to the needs of communities not addressed by traditional criminal justice methods. The new philosophy has taken on different forms and adopted different emphases in various settings across the United States. In this report, we have tried to discuss the implications of community prosecution strategies for evaluation, as the increasing number of programs across the nation underscores the need for rigorous assessment of their impact.

The evaluation framework we have described begins with an attempt to identify the key ingredients of the community prosecution innovation or model, commonalities that are shared by diverse applications of the concept across different settings. The proposed schema is not intended to be authoritative or definitive, but rather serves as a working typology that can be refined and improved upon through feedback from community prosecution jurisdictions across the United States. Using the working typology of community prosecution strategies, we illustrated the model by briefly sketching programs in 36 sites. As noted, we are certain that this is an incomplete list, as efforts are ongoing and sites are identified through various means.

With the community prosecution typology and site illustrations, we have also organized a conceptual framework for evaluating the performance and impact of community prosecution initiatives that incorporates the multidimensional aspect of the goals and methods of the innovation. We propose this evaluative scheme to identify the principal dimensions of concern in measuring impact. We also hope to elicit feedback and comment from jurisdictions about how evaluations can be developed and carried out. We looked to established sites to provide the necessary data to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of different elements and approaches in a way that can contribute to the development of best practices and inform the growing number of jurisdictions participating in community prosecution undertakings across the nation.



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