



National Evaluation of WEED & SEED

Case Study



Shreveport, Louisiana Research Report



U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs
810 Seventh Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20531

Janet Reno
Attorney General

Raymond C. Fisher
Associate Attorney General

Laurie Robinson
Assistant Attorney General

Noël Brennan
Deputy Assistant Attorney General

Jeremy Travis
Director, National Institute of Justice

Office of Justice Programs
World Wide Web Site
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>

National Institute of Justice
World Wide Web Site
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

National Evaluation of Weed and Seed

Shreveport Case Study

RESEARCH REPORT

Terence Dunworth, Ph.D.
Project Director

Gregory Mills
Deputy Project Director

Prepared by

Gary Cordner
Shreveport Site Leader
Cheryl Roberts
Kristen Jacoby

June 1999

NCJ 175702

National Institute of Justice

Jeremy Travis
Director

Steve Edwards
Program Monitor

Prepared for the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice, by Abt Associates Inc., under contract #95-DD-BX-0134. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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

Acknowledgments

This evaluation could not have been completed without the assistance and cooperation of those involved in the Shreveport Weed and Seed effort. We appreciate their willingness to be open and candid during the evaluation. We especially would like to thank the Weed and Seed program staff, including Mr. Jim Roberts, Program Director; Ms. Mary Ellen Hoffman, Seed Coordinator; Lieutenant Jackie Lewis, Weed Coordinator; the Weed and Seed officers; and Ms. Angela Tappe. We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the many community representatives and organizations, the Shreveport Police Department, and staff from the District Attorney's and U.S. Attorney's Offices. Special thanks to Ms. Susan Reno, who provided data from the Shreveport Police Department, and Dr. Sandra Long, the local evaluator.

Contents

Acknowledgments	iii
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Case Study Objective and Methodology	2
3.0 Site History and Description	3
3.1 City Characteristics	3
3.2 Target Area Characteristics and Nature of Problems	3
3.3 Other Funding Sources	6
4.0 Program Structure and Chronology	7
4.1 Formal Organizational Structure	7
4.2 Proposed Goals and Strategies	8
4.3 Budget Information	10
4.4 Information Systems	10
4.5 Site Monitoring, Reporting, and Local Evaluation	10
5.0 Key Implementation Issues and Interpretation	12
5.1 Role of Grantee Organization	12
5.2 Management Structure and Control	13
5.3 Local Politics	14
5.4 Operational Goals	14
5.5 Approach to Weeding	15
5.6 Approach to Community Policing	18
5.7 Approach to Seeding	19
5.8 Concluding Observations	25
6.0 Effects of Weed and Seed	26
6.1 Analysis of Crime Data	26
6.2 Survey of Community Residents	28
6.3 Seeding Program Participant Interviews	51
7.0 Future Directions and Degree of Institutionalization	56

List of Exhibits

Exhibit 3.1: Part 1 Crimes per 1,000 Residents	4
Exhibit 3.2: Shreveport Weed and Seed Area	5
Exhibit 4.1: Shreveport Weed and Seed Proposed Budget	11
Exhibit 5.1: Part 1 Arrests per Capita by Month	16
Exhibit 5.2: Drug Arrests per Capita by Month	16
Exhibit 6.1: Part 1 Crime Data, Shreveport	27
Exhibit 6.2: Part 1 Crimes per Capita by Month	28
Exhibit 6.3: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents	32
Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood	35
Exhibit 6.5: Victimization	41
Exhibit 6.6: Police Response	43
Exhibit 6.7: Community Involvement	46
Exhibit 6.8: Perceptions of Social Services and Other Programs	48
Exhibit 6.9: Perceptions of the Weed and Seed Program	50

1.0 Introduction

Unveiled in 1991, Operation Weed and Seed represents an ambitious attempt to improve the quality of life in America's cities. The ultimate goals of Weed and Seed are to control violent crime, drug trafficking, and drug-related crime in targeted high-crime neighborhoods and to provide a safe environment, free of crime and drug use, in which law-abiding citizens can live, work, and raise their families. Weed and Seed, administered by the Executive Office for Weed and Seed (EOWS), is grounded in the philosophy that targeted areas can best be improved by a two-pronged strategy of "weeding" out violent offenders, drug traffickers, and other criminals by removing them from the targeted area and "seeding" the area with human services and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Community policing is intended to serve as the "bridge" between weeding and seeding.

Three key objectives emphasize the government-community partnership at the heart of Weed and Seed:

1. To **develop a comprehensive, multiagency strategy** to control and prevent violent crime, drug trafficking, and drug-related crime in targeted high-crime neighborhoods.
2. To **coordinate and integrate both new and existing Federal, State, local, and private sector initiatives, criminal justice efforts, and human services**, concentrating these resources in project sites to maximize their impact on reducing and preventing violent crime, drug trafficking, and drug-related crime.
3. To **mobilize community residents** in the targeted sites to assist law enforcement in identifying and removing violent offenders and drug traffickers from their neighborhoods and to assist other human services agencies in identifying and responding to the needs of the target area.

Weed and Seed sites thus draw on the resources of a variety of agencies at all levels of government, private and other public organizations, and individual community residents.

Specific strategies and program components designed to achieve these three objectives fall into one of four Weed and Seed program elements:

1. **Law enforcement.** Weed and Seed's law enforcement goals are the identification, arrest, prosecution, conviction, and incarceration of narcotics traffickers and violent criminals operating in the target area.
2. **Community policing.** An objective of community policing is to establish mutual trust between law enforcement and the public. This is the bridge between weeding and seeding: law enforcement officials enlist the community's help to identify patterns of criminal activity and locate perpetrators; simultaneously, police help the community solve problems.

3. **Prevention, intervention, and treatment.** This element of the program is intended to reduce risk factors and to enhance protective factors associated with drug abuse, violence, and crime in the target area. Safe havens in the target areas typically coordinate prevention, intervention, and treatment activities.
4. **Neighborhood restoration.** The goal of this element is to enable residents in the target area to improve their community morale, their neighborhood's physical appearance (buildings, parks, streets, lighting, and so forth), and local economic and business conditions.

An important structural feature of Weed and Seed is the local steering committee. EOWS requires each site to have a steering committee, formally chaired by the U.S. Attorney for the district in which the site is located, that is responsible for “establishing Weed and Seed’s goals and objectives, designing and developing programs, providing guidance on implementation, and assessing program achievement.”¹

Steering committee members include representatives from key local, State, and Federal agencies, as well as other stakeholders in the target area, such as business leaders, tenant association leaders, and community activists. The requirement to convene a steering committee reflects EOWS’s belief that, for neighborhood revitalization to work, all key stakeholders must participate in the decisions that affect the target area.

Funded sites were divided into officially recognized sites and demonstration sites. Officially recognized sites had implemented Weed and Seed strategies in their jurisdictions, had submitted documentation summarizing their strategy to EOWS, but had not yet received full funding. Once officially recognized, sites were eligible for demonstration status and full Weed and Seed funding.

2.0 Case Study Objective and Methodology

This case study is one of eight completed for the National Evaluation of Weed and Seed, under the direction of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). In 1994, NIJ selected the following eight sites for the national evaluation:

- Hartford, Connecticut; Las Vegas, Nevada; Sarasota and Manatee Counties, Florida; and Shreveport, Louisiana, were demonstration sites that first received funding in FY 1994.
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Seattle, Washington, were demonstration sites awarded continuation funding in FY 1994.
- Akron, Ohio, and Salt Lake City, Utah, were officially recognized sites.

¹ Executive Office for Weed and Seed, “Operation Weed and Seed Implementation Manual,” p. 2–1.

Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, and Sarasota/Manatee also received funds from the National Performance Review Laboratory (NPRL).²

This case study documents the activities implemented under the Weed and Seed program in Shreveport and assesses the program's impact at this site. The final evaluation report compares the eight sites and presents overall conclusions on the Weed and Seed program.

The evaluation activities undertaken for this case study include: (1) onsite observation of program activities; (2) inperson interviews with program staff, key law enforcement personnel, community leaders, service providers, and participants; (3) review of program documents; (4) a survey of target area residents; and (5) analysis of computerized crime and arrest records provided by the local police department.

3.0 Site History and Description

3.1 City Characteristics

Shreveport, with a population of 198,525, is the third largest city in Louisiana. The city functions as a metropolitan resource for southwest Arkansas, northeast Texas, and northwest Louisiana. A depressed economy following the oil bust motivated many residents to leave the Shreveport area, resulting in declining neighborhoods and growing crime rates. Riverboat gambling has recently provided modest economic growth for the city but has not compensated for former business losses. As exhibit 3.1 illustrates, Shreveport's levels of Part 1 crimes are about double the national average.³ Shreveport was ranked the 15th Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in the United States for number of murders, although it ranked 114th in population.⁴

3.2 Target Area Characteristics and Nature of Problems

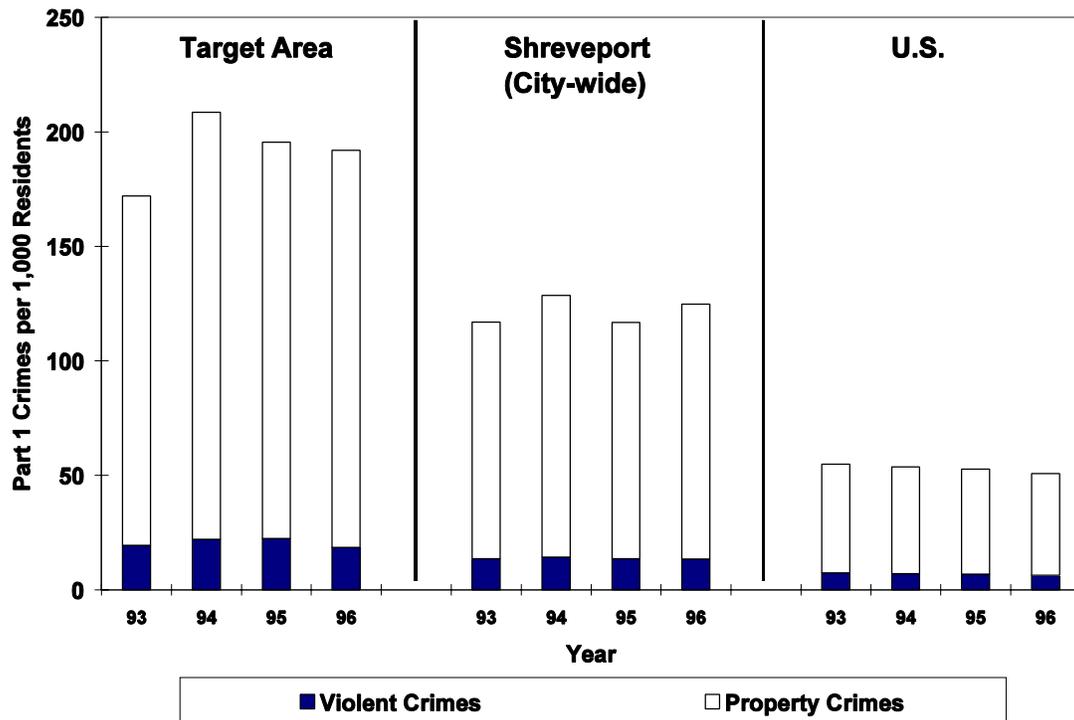
The Weed and Seed target area in Shreveport is the contiguous neighborhoods of Highland and Stoner Hill. (See exhibit 3.2.) The Highland-Stoner Hill target area covers 5.2 square miles and has an estimated population of 12,668. Interstate 20 (suspected to be one of the major routes for drug trafficking from Los Angeles) borders the area on its north side, with King's Highway as the southern boundary.

2 The National Performance Review Task Force (now renamed the National Partnership for Reinventing Government) designated a number of governmental organizations or activities as National Performance Review Laboratories (now Reinvention Laboratories) to test "reinventing government" initiatives. These labs have developed more efficient ways to deliver government services by creating new partnerships between entities, streamlining bureaucratic processes, and empowering organizations to make substantial changes. The mission of the Weed and Seed Reinvention Laboratory is to develop more effective mechanisms that combine and deliver Federal, State, and local resources in Weed and Seed sites.

3 Crime statistics for Shreveport and the target area (exhibit 3.1) were generated from incident-level crime data provided by the Shreveport Police Department. Part 1 crimes include violent crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault) and property crimes (burglary, larceny, auto theft).

4 Shreveport 1994 Weed and Seed application, with population data from the 1990 census.

**Exhibit 3.1
Part 1 Crimes per 1,000 Residents**



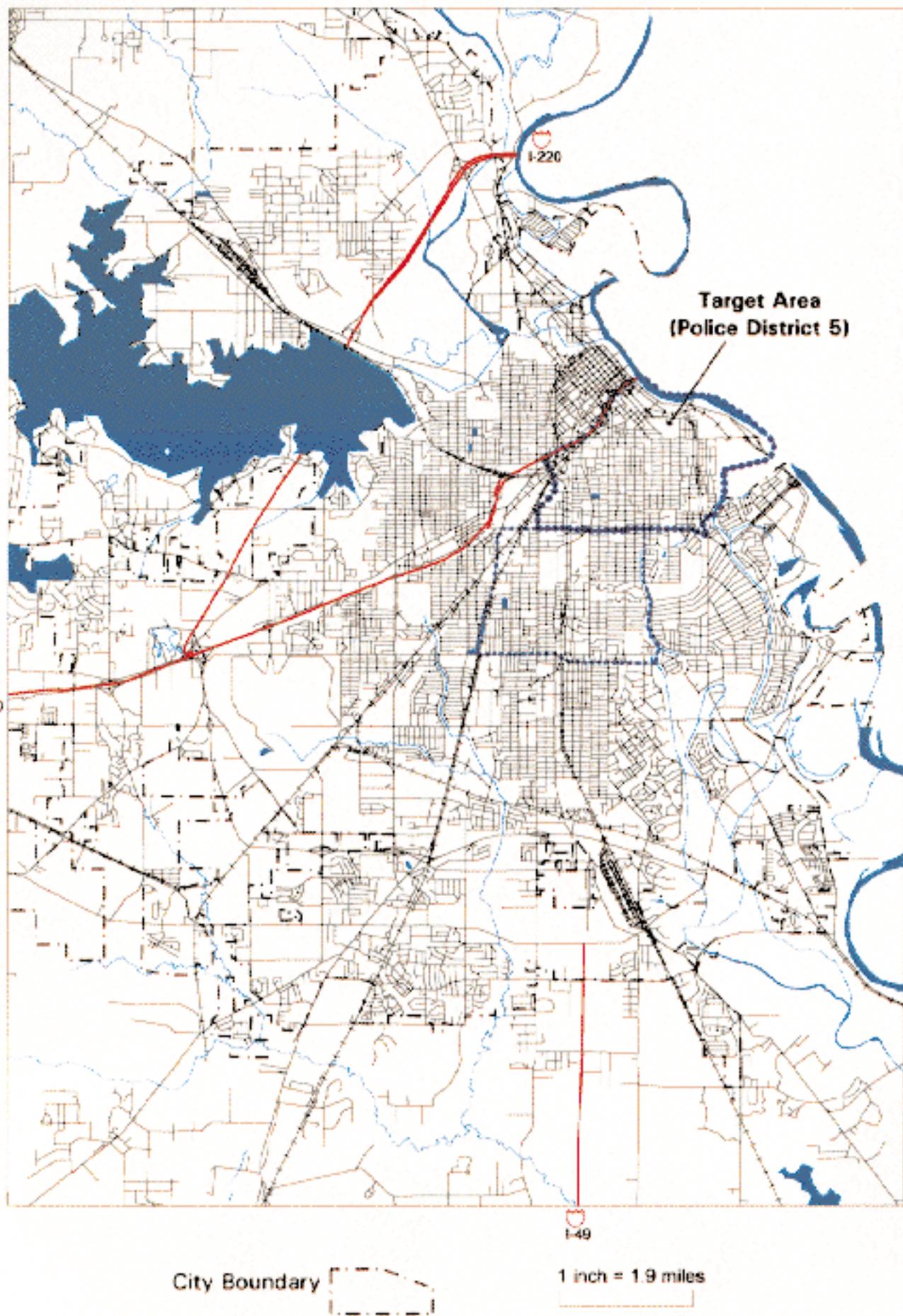
The Highland-Stoner Hill area is among the oldest neighborhoods in the city, containing two of Shreveport’s historic districts. The community is the most culturally and racially diverse area in the city. Highland-Stoner Hill has a relatively large number of single-family homes and medical facilities, as well as approximately 550 businesses.⁵ The area contains two public housing complexes.

The oil and gas production slump that beset both Shreveport and Louisiana has seriously affected the Highland-Stoner Hill area. In 1990, the area’s unemployment rate was more than 50 percent, and per capita income was \$8,143—46 percent below the national average. Between 26 and 42 percent of families lived below the poverty level, depending on the neighborhood, and between 15 and 27 percent of households received public assistance.⁶ Although there are some owner-occupied homes, the physical environment of the area had deteriorated. Property values and home ownership had declined, and the number of vacant properties had increased.

5 Shreveport 1995 Weed and Seed grant application, City of Shreveport Chamber of Commerce.

6 Shreveport 1994 Weed and Seed grant application, citing 1990 census data.

Exhibit 3.2
Shreveport Weed and Seed Area



Highland-Stoner Hill has consistently had the largest number of police calls for service and crimes of any area in the city. From 1987 to 1991, violent crime in the target area increased by 44 percent; in one 2-year period (September 1990 to August 1992), a total of 446 violent crimes were reported in the area. The Shreveport Chamber of Commerce identified Highland-Stoner Hill as the area with the highest business-related crime in the city.⁷

As shown in exhibit 3.1, in 1994, prior to Weed and Seed, the target area's violent crime rate was 57 percent higher than for the rest of the city, and the property crime rate was 72 percent higher.⁸ From 1993 to 1994, Part 1 crimes increased by 21 percent in the target area compared with 9 percent in the rest of the city. Law enforcement officials estimated three-fourths of crime in the target area was due to drug trafficking.⁹

3.3 Other Funding Sources

Several other externally funded programs besides Weed and Seed have provided services to the target area:

- The Community Partnership for a Drug-Free Shreveport, funded through a 5-year grant by the Federal Center for Substance Abuse and Prevention (CSAP), members of which have served on the Weed and Seed steering committee.
- The Community Partnership Enrichment Program (CPEP), funded by an NPRL supplemental grant to provide youth afterschool activities in 1994–95.
- Police Hiring Supplement Funds grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance to deploy several Community Liaison Officers (CLOs), one of whom is responsible for an area that includes the target neighborhoods.
- Federal funds to establish a Drug Court.
- A grant from the Pew Charitable Trust to train community leaders.

7 Shreveport 1994 Weed and Seed grant application.

8 Crime statistics for Shreveport and the target area (exhibit 3.1) were generated from incident-level crime data provided by the Shreveport Police Department.

9 Shreveport 1994 Weed and Seed grant application.

4.0 Program Structure and Chronology

4.1 Formal Organizational Structure

In 1992, a group of Federal, State, and city officials and community leaders initiated the Shreveport Weed and Seed project and, in January 1993, Shreveport was officially recognized as a Weed and Seed community.¹⁰ In October 1994, Shreveport became a fully funded demonstration site. The original grantee, the Shreveport Police Department, changed to the mayor's office, and then reverted back to the police department during the first year of the project.

Shreveport's Weed and Seed organizational structure is composed of the steering committee, an executive committee, a Weed and Seed program director, a weed coordinator, a seed coordinator, a weed committee, and two seed committees.

The steering committee, which meets monthly, has been as large as 30 members but currently has 14 members that include representatives from the U.S. Attorney's Office; Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF); Shreveport Police Department (SPD); and the City of Shreveport. Other organizations represented include the Caddo Parish District Attorney's office, Stoner Hill Neighborhood Action Group, Highland Area Partnership, Highland Restoration Association, Wilkinson Terrace Residential Council, Schumpert Foundations, and Chamber of Commerce. A resident from each target neighborhood serves on the committee.

In addition to this overall steering committee, a five-member executive committee provides immediate decisionmaking as needed between steering committee meetings. The executive committee includes representatives from the U.S. Attorney's Office, the police department, the mayor's office, a Stoner Hill community leader, and the seed coordinator.

Until 1997, there was significant turnover in staff, which delayed seeding program implementation. The original seed coordinator was replaced during the first year of the project. She performed her seed coordinator duties as a volunteer while she ran the afterschool programs funded by Weed and Seed. She found it difficult to manage the administrative requirements of both positions and to work effectively with the school systems, where the afterschool programs were housed. The seed coordinator who replaced her has been effective in this position; she was hired to work on a full-time basis and had extensive experience with community organizations.

The first two program directors hired by the steering committee also had to be replaced. Both seemed to have good credentials on paper but lacked grants management experience, which proved to be a critical aspect of program management. The first program director found it difficult to deal with the city's fiscal and management systems. The second program director also had conflicts with other Weed and Seed staff. The assistant to the chief of police stepped in to serve as acting program director during the staff changes in that position and retained that post from early 1997 to February 1998, during which time leadership was strong. In February 1998, the area captain responsible for the Weed

¹⁰ Shreveport 1994 Weed and Seed grant application.

and Seed target area was assigned to direct the program. This was seen as a way to integrate the Weed and Seed program into the normal operations and structure of the department, instead of running it as a special program out of the chief's office.

The key staff positions in the Weed and Seed program are currently filled as follows:

- **Program director**—staffed by the area captain assigned to the Weed and Seed target area.
- **Weed coordinator**—a full-time position staffed by a police lieutenant, whose salary is paid by the police department.
- **Seed coordinator**—a full-time position, paid by the Weed and Seed grant.
- **Administrative assistant**—a full-time position, paid by the Weed and Seed grant.

4.2 Proposed Goals and Strategies

In 1994, the city of Shreveport applied for and received \$750,000 in Weed and Seed funds (including Asset Forfeiture moneys), having outlined the following goals and strategies in its application:

Law enforcement:

- Increase law enforcement presence by increasing personnel deployed in the target area.
- Reduce drug trafficking through coordinated arrest and prosecution efforts.
- Target repeat offenders for removal from the target area.
- Reduce weapons violations through directed patrols and Project Triggerlock.
- Reduce gang influence through targeted enforcement.

The law enforcement strategy was developed through a partnership consisting of the Shreveport Police Department, U.S. Attorney's Office, Caddo Parish District Attorney, DEA, and ATF.

Community policing:

- Involve the community in targeting problems through joint activities with the police.
- Establish a community liaison officer position assigned to the target area.
- Establish a mobile crime prevention education unit and information center.

- Establish a Neighbor Assistance Team Office (a community relations division of the community policing program) at Wilkinson Terrace to provide a direct link with Federal housing tenants.
- Increase police personhours by providing additional patrols of the target area.

A key component of the community policing strategies was expansion of two unique local programs—the Neighborhood Assistance Team and the community liaison officers.

Prevention/intervention/treatment:

- Establish safe havens at three neighborhood schools and involve youths in planning future projects at safe haven sites.
- Increase substance abuse and law-related education with specific curricular programs.
- Establish a community clearinghouse for treatment information at the Community Involvement Center.

Neighborhood restoration:

- Increase code enforcement by assigning an additional code enforcement officer dedicated to the target area.
- Enhance neighborhood relations through Community Involvement Center usage, special events, and so forth.
- Enhance the target area’s image to attract new families and businesses.
- Attract economic development (private sector) through coordination of economic development and employment efforts.

Shreveport’s second-year application (for 1995–96) included several new or refined goals. In the law enforcement component of the grant, Shreveport intended to increase the bicycle patrol in both numbers and area covered. Community policing goals included increasing the number of neighborhood watch groups and revitalizing existing programs, incorporating a communications system to address specific problems and concerns of the business community, and enhancing community education programs to increase awareness of different police services. The seeding component would continue to focus on the safe havens and developing recreational and educational programs for area youths, including substance abuse and violence prevention. A new goal for neighborhood restoration was to collaborate with the court system to arrange for people sentenced to community service to work in the target area.

Shreveport’s third-year application (for 1996–97) outlined enhancements and modifications to the different program components. The Shreveport Police Department intended to strengthen partnerships with the community by establishing a Community Action Team to identify problems, solutions, and recommendations, while continuing and expanding community oriented policing projects in the Weed

and Seed site. The department also wanted to include a centralized educational component to provide information and training on issues such as law enforcement, crime prevention, community oriented policing, drug awareness, and/or juvenile justice. The department's final goal was to reduce by 10 percent those crimes caused by and associated with active drug markets, gang activities, and repeat offenders. Goals of the neighborhood restoration element included increased and targeted code enforcement by dividing the target area into manageable areas and empowering residents to take action; solving three major neighborhood restoration problems through better coordination with city, State, and private agencies; and supporting two new economic development projects to demonstrate that the Highland-Stoner Hill area is a desirable place in which to live and work.

4.3 Budget Information

Exhibit 4.1 displays the site's annual grant awards and budget allocations as set forth in its grant applications. Due to delays in program implementation, the program did not spend all of its funds awarded in the first year (1994–95). The program used carryover funds for FY 1997 and applied for its fourth year funding in FY 1998. In general, weeding has commanded the largest share of the budget, with seeding close behind. Community policing receives almost half as much as the other operations. The Asset Forfeiture funds have been spent on special law enforcement training, operations, and equipment, such as a mobile police substation.

On the seeding side, in FY 1997–98, most of the funds were allocated to the safe havens, including \$81,634 for Youth Enrichment Plus, an afterschool program at three elementary schools; \$29,205 for Shreveport Community Renewal Kids Club, for afterschool and summer activities; and \$20,000 for the Salvation Army, for an afterschool and summer program.

In FY 1996, Weed and Seed received in-kind donations of supplies and equipment, such as police bicycles, from resident associations and businesses, worth approximately \$8,000.

4.4 Information Systems

The police officers assigned to weeding and community policing duties within the Weed and Seed target area have developed their own crime analysis capacity to support deployment decisions and tactical planning. They have obtained crime and call-for-service data from headquarters and have created their own customized data bases.

4.5 Site Monitoring, Reporting, and Local Evaluation

Staff members in the Weed and Seed office, including the weed coordinator, the seed coordinator, an administrative assistant, and a receptionist, maintain extensive records on project activities; such records include numbers of phone calls and visits to the Weed and Seed office, committee meeting attendance and minutes, numbers of participants in various programs offered through Weed and Seed, and a complete set of newspaper clippings and related publicity materials. These records and materials are used to compile the required periodic reports to the Executive Office for Weed and Seed.

Exhibit 4.1
Shreveport Weed and Seed Proposed Budget

	FY 1994	FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997
TOTAL	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	0 (deferred to 1998)*
WEEDING TOTAL	\$285,580	\$253,750	\$250,000	
Enforcement overtime	\$34,866	\$69,368	\$58,000	
Training	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$12,000	
Robbery/homicide investigation	\$19,240	0	0	
Enforcement equipment	\$134,417	\$134,382	\$172,000	
Evidence/informant purchases	\$5,000	\$30,000	\$8,000	
District Attorney's office (funding declined by D.A.)	\$72,057	0	0	
COMMUNITY POLICING TOTAL	\$142,703	\$92,473	\$96,200	
Patrol Division overtime	\$117,703	\$92,473	\$96,200	
Patrol Division equipment	\$25,000	0	0	
SEEDING TOTAL	\$240,000	\$158,645	\$214,935	
Safe havens/youth afterschool and summer programming	\$195,000	\$84,884	\$142,000	
Other seeding programs	\$20,000	\$12,575	\$2,000	
Patrol overtime for monitoring cleanups	0	0	\$14,600	
Code enforcement officer	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$25,000	
Seed coordinator	0	\$31,186	\$31,135	
OTHER TOTALS	\$81,717	\$245,132	\$188,812	
Weed and Seed project director (with benefits)	\$34,500	\$41,813	\$38,703	
Weed and Seed administrative assistant (with benefits)	\$18,400	\$20,581	\$20,749	
Weed and Seed receptionist (with benefits)	0	\$18,038	\$18,160	
Travel	0	\$7,000	0	
Weed and Seed supplies	\$8,817	\$33,200	\$16,500	
Weed and Seed training (includes travel)	\$5,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	
Weed and Seed office rent	\$5,000	\$13,200	0	
Other costs	0	\$53,800	\$37,200	
Local evaluation	\$10,000	\$37,500	\$37,500	

Source: Compiled from Weed and Seed grant applications; includes \$250,000 per year in Asset Forfeiture funding.

*Note: In FY 1997 the site used funds remaining from prior years due to the delayed program implementation.

EOWS authorized postponing the FY 1997 cycle of funding to FY 1998.