



BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance

DRUG MARKET INTERVENTION PROGRAM

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), through the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) strategy, supports training and technical assistance for local teams interested in implementing an open-air drug market intervention (DMI) initiative that is commonly referred to as the High Point model. DMI addresses the challenge of effectively responding to illegal drug markets and their associated crime, violence, and disorder that has proven challenging for communities and law enforcement for decades.

DMI is a strategic problem-solving initiative aimed at permanently closing down open-air drug markets. The strategy targets individual drug markets using focused deterrence with transformational elements. The most violent offenders are targeted and prosecuted as examples. The strategy then targets low-level offenders and stages an intervention with families and community leaders. Law enforcement mobilizes community residents, leaders, and family members of low-level drug dealers to voice their intolerance for this criminal behavior and to create opportunity and support for the offenders. Offenders are given the option to straighten up or face lengthy prison sentences and are provided assistance in locating employment, housing, transportation, health care, and access to other social services. In High Point, NC, the strategy involved few arrests, mostly employed problem-solving approaches, and has resulted in a complete transformation of the targeted areas. The results were immediate and have been sustained for over four years. High Point's most troubled neighborhoods have seen dramatically improved conditions and reduced drug and violent crime citywide. Most importantly, these changes happened in a way that addressed and repaired deep historic racial divisions in the community. The neighborhoods themselves have now taken responsibility for safety in the community. Other jurisdictions that have successfully implemented this strategy include Providence; Rockford, IL; Raleigh, SC; Nassau County, NY; and Nashville, TN.

BJA has partnered with Michigan State University, David Kennedy of John Jay College, and American University to administer this training and technical assistance initiative. It consists of a continuum of three trainings for up to 10 target sites interested in replicating the strategy. The first training consists primarily of presentations on the foundational elements of the strategy by various representatives from jurisdictions that have already implemented the strategy. The second and third trainings add additional presentations on more advanced topics such as working with the media, how to collect data for performance measures, funding/resources, and sustainability issues. These later sessions also focus on problem solving through breakout sessions, in which team members work with their peers within their discipline as well as other teams to overcome obstacles and challenges to that they are facing in implementing the strategy. They also have opportunities to consult with representatives from other successful communities who have experienced similar challenges and are able to provide counsel and advice.

Each selected site's team consists of a law enforcement officer, a local prosecutor, a community leader, and a social service provider, who will attend all three trainings. Each team will receive a site visit from a BJA technical assistance provider, along with ongoing support to help them adapt the model to their unique context. National partners are also currently developing a training manual for target sites that interested jurisdictions can use to implement DMI locally. In FY 2007, BJA provided training and technical assistance to the following sites: Baltimore, MD; Chicago, IL; Cook County, IL; Dallas, TX; Durham, NC; Indianapolis, IN; Milwaukee, WI; New Haven, CT; and Ocala, FL.

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