



# National Evaluation of WEED & SEED

## Case Study



## Shreveport, Louisiana Research Report



Executive Office for Weed & Seed



**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

<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	iii
<b>1.0 Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>2.0 Case Study Objective and Methodology</b> .....	2
<b>3.0 Site History and Description</b> .....	3
3.1 City Characteristics .....	3
3.2 Target Area Characteristics and Nature of Problems .....	3
3.3 Other Funding Sources .....	6
<b>4.0 Program Structure and Chronology</b> .....	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
<b>5.0 Key Implementation Issues and Interpretation</b> .....	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
<b>6.0 Effects of Weed and Seed</b> .....	26
6.1 Analysis of Crime Data .....	26
6.2 Survey of Community Residents .....	28
6.3 Seeding Program Participant Interviews .....	51
<b>7.0 Future Directions and Degree of Institutionalization</b> .....	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.”<sup>1</sup>

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.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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).<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> Shreveport was ranked the 15th Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in the United States for number of murders, although it ranked 114th in population.<sup>4</sup>

### **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.

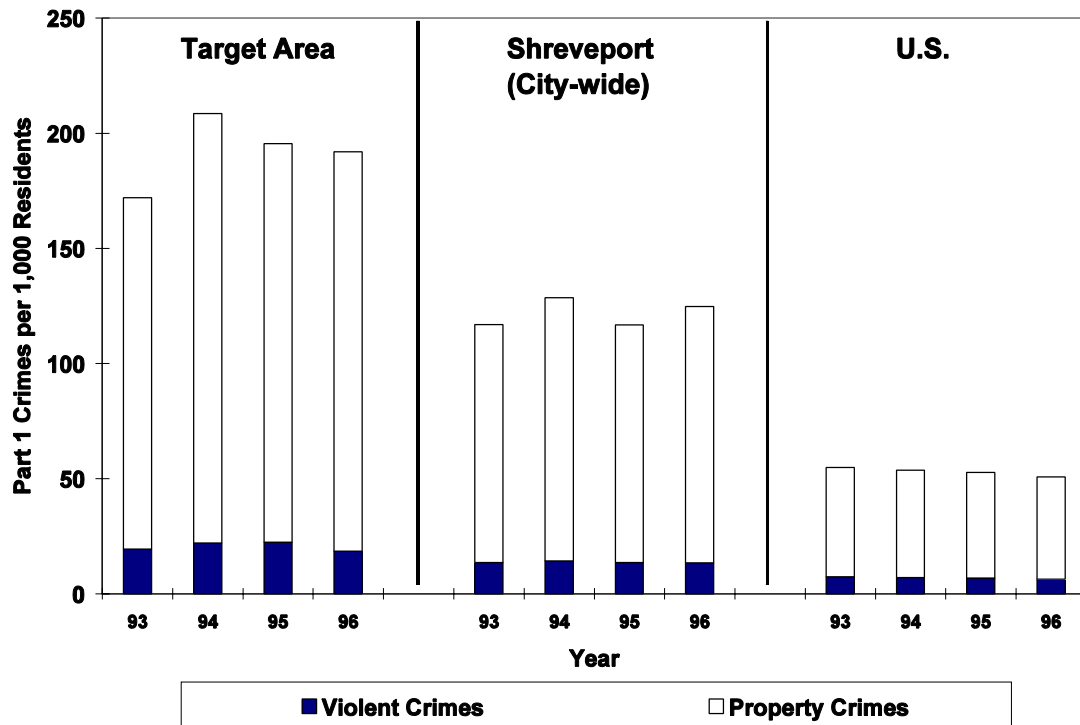
---

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**



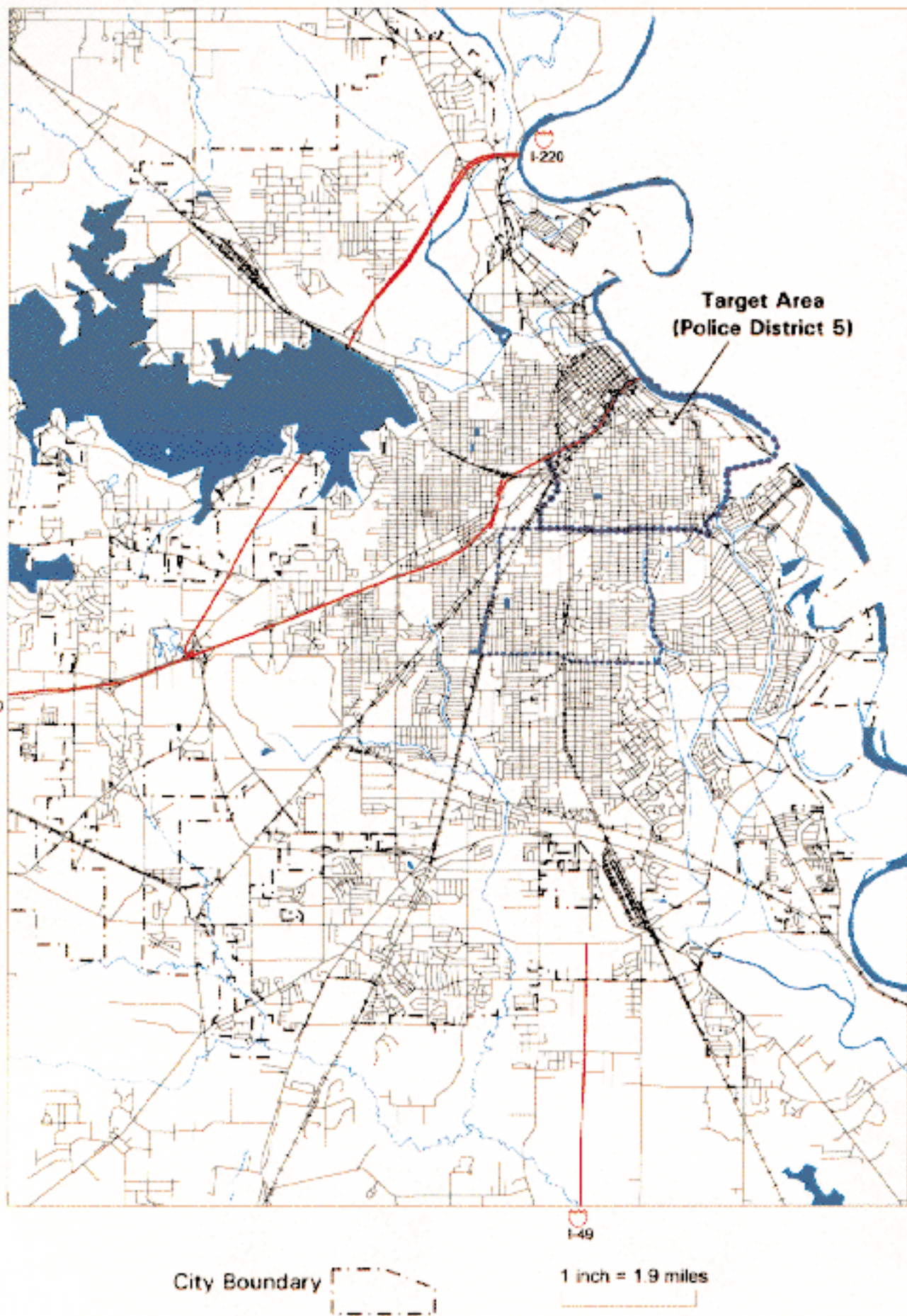
The Highland-Stoner Hill area is among the oldest neighborhoods in the city, containing two of Shreveport’s historic districts. The community is the most culturally and racially diverse area in the city. Highland-Stoner Hill has a relatively large number of single-family homes and medical facilities, as well as approximately 550 businesses.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

### 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.<sup>10</sup> 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

---

<sup>10</sup> 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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	<b>0</b> (deferred to 1998)*
<b>WEEDING TOTAL</b>	<b>\$285,580</b>	<b>\$253,750</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	
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	
<b>COMMUNITY POLICING TOTAL</b>	<b>\$142,703</b>	<b>\$92,473</b>	<b>\$96,200</b>	
Patrol Division overtime	\$117,703	\$92,473	\$96,200	
Patrol Division equipment	\$25,000	0	0	
<b>SEEDING TOTAL</b>	<b>\$240,000</b>	<b>\$158,645</b>	<b>\$214,935</b>	
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	
<b>OTHER TOTALS</b>	<b>\$81,717</b>	<b>\$245,132</b>	<b>\$188,812</b>	
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.

Program staff noted they had to set up special accounting procedures for Federal reporting on each year's grant because the city, which processed the grant, did not have a system in place to track the grants according to Federal requirements. This was a significant undertaking, and staff advised other grantees to plan ahead in setting up the local accounting system.

The principal issue of concern to Shreveport officials in terms of their relationship to the funding agency was the delay in authorization to hire a local evaluator. Apparently, EOWS urged grantees to delay contracting for local evaluations until the national Weed and Seed evaluation was underway. As a result, the Shreveport program was 21 months old before the present local evaluator was hired.<sup>11</sup> The program director feels better decisions could have been made, especially on the seeding side, if process evaluation information had been available sooner.

Shreveport officials have been pleased with the performance of their local evaluation firm, Behavioral Analysis. Not only is the principal evaluator familiar with the target area, she had already provided an evaluation of the Community Partnership Enrichment Program, which was affiliated with Weed and Seed during its first year in Shreveport. The evaluation has relied primarily on interviews with project participants and a community mail survey. The evaluator incorporated the risk-factors strategic approach, from the Communities That Care model, into the evaluation criteria. The local evaluation has provided assessments to Weed and Seed staff on a quarterly basis as well as an overall evaluation report. Evaluation staff also helped Weed and Seed staff review and assess proposed new seeding programs.

Shreveport was one of the few sites among the eight national evaluation sites that conducted an independent local evaluation.

## **5.0 Key Implementation Issues and Interpretation**

### **5.1 Role of Grantee Organization**

Shreveport has been a fully funded demonstration site since its initial Weed and Seed grant award in 1994. The city was also an NPRL site but decided to drop out of the NPRL program and decline funding when it was unable to obtain adequate NPRL program guidelines.

Although the Shreveport Police Department was the original grantee on the application, the program was intended to be housed in the mayor's office. By the time the grant was awarded, however, a mayoral change had taken place, and the new administration assigned the program to the police department. Early in the first year of the Weed and Seed grant, after the staff had been hired, the mayor's office decided to run the program and move it back to the mayor's office. The new mayoral staff were not very experienced with grants, however. In light of the problems encountered with the original program director and seeding coordinator, EOWS advised Shreveport officials to return the program to the police department, which they did.

---

<sup>11</sup> In Shreveport, the first evaluation firm was dismissed because it could not recognize and diagnose significant initial implementation problems: the evaluator painted a false rosy picture instead of providing constructive analysis and feedback.

The administrative shift to the police department helps explain why weeding activities in Shreveport got off to a quicker start than seeding activities; however, the most important explanation for the slow start on seeding was the unsatisfactory performance of the original program director and seeding coordinator (discussed in section 4.1). After these staff members were replaced, seeding activity increased dramatically due to the effective coordination and oversight the new staff brought to the program.

On one hand, project personnel feel the police department is not the most desirable home for a Weed and Seed project, despite the improved seeding performance since 1996. They believe the police department is not set up to handle social services programs and that Weed and Seed has a better chance to be institutionalized if it is centrally based in city government. Program staff think the project ideally should be based out of the mayor's office or under an independent commission, with weeding activity subcontracted to the police department and seeding handled by the city's community services office.

On the other hand, the police department provided strong leadership and oversight to the project, particularly under the helm of the most recent program director, who is also the administrative assistant to the chief of police. Furthermore, with the present arrangement, weeding and seeding operations are housed together at a central Weed and Seed program office, allowing for stronger program integration. So while the mayor's office may be the more natural home for the program, there are practical local factors that made the police department more effective in the short-term.

## **5.2 Management Structure and Control**

### **Decisionmaking authority and accountability**

During the project's first year, decisionmaking authority and accountability were vague and diffuse, due in part to the inexperience and ineffectiveness of the initial program director and seeding coordinator. In addition, the 30-member steering committee was too large and inexperienced. As a result, fairly straightforward police weeding activities were implemented successfully, but seeding activities were initially few and unfocused. Finally, the original impetus for Shreveport's participation in Weed and Seed came largely from the U.S. Attorney, but he shifted the responsibility for implementation to the city and never became fully engaged in the program's operations.

Since its second year, the project has operated more smoothly and with more accountability. The current program director has provided both direction and close supervision. The new seeding coordinator, who already had close ties to social service providers in the area, has developed a good working relationship with both the program director and the weeding coordinator.

The steering committee has generally become more effective as it has been restructured, reduced in size, and complemented with an executive committee and separate weeding and seeding subcommittees. One problem that has developed, however, is some steering committee members frequently send their alternates to meetings. This devalues the meetings and the project, and it hampers decisionmaking on major issues because the alternates lack authority to commit their agencies to new policies or programs.

Six of the 14 steering committee members are neighborhood residents or representatives of community organizations, and two others represent nongovernmental organizations (the Chamber of Commerce and a major foundation based in the target area). As a result, government officials are in the minority on the committee. Perhaps because of this structural condition, decisions made by the steering committee seem to have benefitted from substantial community input. Law enforcement and prosecution concerns have not dominated the committee's decisions.

### **5.3 Local Politics**

Local politics have disrupted and constrained Shreveport's Weed and Seed program in three ways:

- The initial placement of the Weed and Seed program in the mayor's office was unsuccessful, at least in part, because local elections diverted attention from the program; then, after the elections, the city administration changed. It was not until the program was transferred to the police department that accountability and decisionmaking authority were established and implemented.
- The local school board also changed during this time, affecting the implementation of school-based safe havens.
- Local politics has interfered with the prosecution of Weed and Seed cases in local and State courts. The district attorney, an elected official, has taken the position that it would be politically inappropriate for his office to target any one geographic area. This decision, combined with the total absence of any Federal Weed and Seed prosecutions, has seriously undermined weeding efforts in Shreveport.

### **5.4 Operational Goals**

A reasonable degree of synergy between weeding and seeding goals seems to have been achieved in Shreveport due to three primary factors:

- Weeding and seeding staff have operated out of the same facility almost since the beginning of the program, permitting familiarity and trust to develop.
- From the program's beginning, weeding staff initiated a bicycle patrol, with distinctive informal attire (yellow shirts). As a result, although they have focused primarily on enforcement, they have also built some of the community policing bridge envisioned between weeding and seeding.
- The Communities That Care strategic planning process helped provide a clear focus for Weed and Seed planning and programming, especially on the seeding side, according to project staff. A total of 70 people participated in a 3-day process that identified several key community issues and risk factors. Additional meetings were held to narrow the focus even further. Subsequently, EOWS proposals were oriented around these issues and risk factors, as were subcontract requests for proposals (RFPs). Although this entire

process proved to be rather time-consuming, it built consensus and strengthened program coherence.

Weeding program coherence has been aided by widespread recognition, among staff and the community, that drug use and violence had gotten out of hand in some neighborhoods within the target area and needed to be addressed, while seeding program coherence was aided by police recognition that youth programs, especially afterschool and summer activities, were sorely needed in the area.

## **5.5 Approach to Weeding**

The weeding officers in Shreveport's target area have developed effective relationships with several other units in the police department, including the Neighborhood Assistance Team, Community Liaison Officers, the Narcotics Division, and the city detectives. Basically, the weeding officers have become the community policing "geographic specialists" who are more familiar with residents, suspects, and neighborhood problems in the target area than anyone else in the police department.

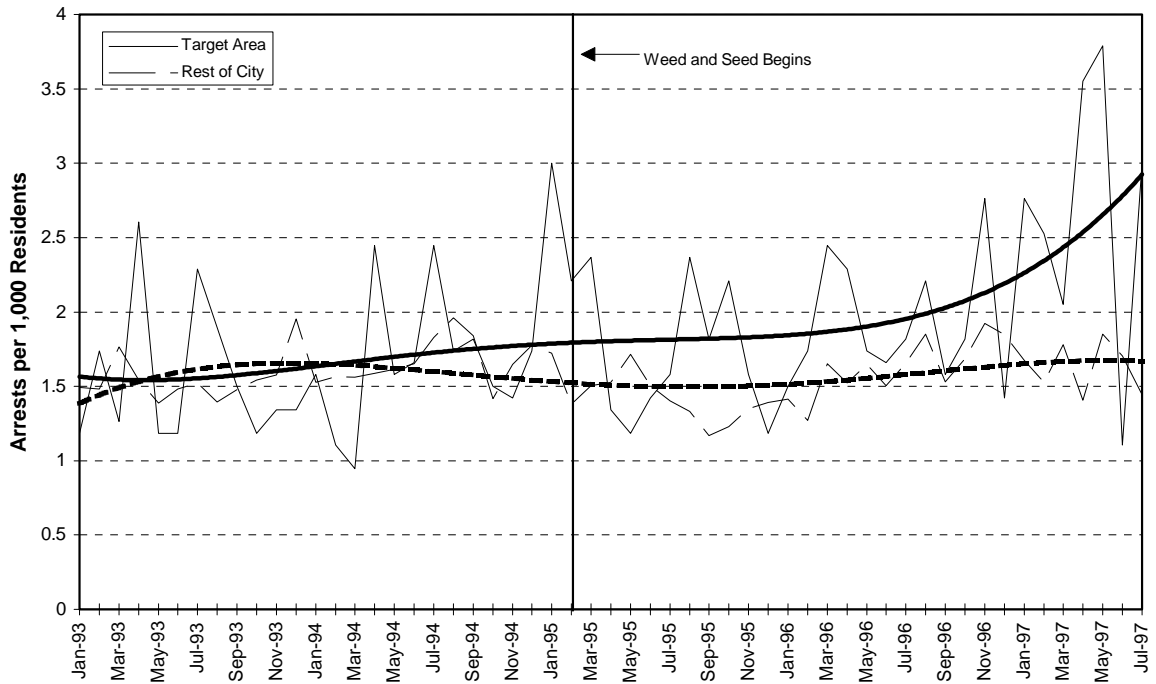
Shreveport's Weed and Seed program did not begin with a major crime sweep or crackdown, as in some other cities, but rather with the permanent assignment of a small number of additional officers to the target area. The number of weeding officers has varied between two and four during the life of the project, in addition to a lieutenant who serves as the weeding coordinator.

The weeding officers work primarily during daylight hours, patrol in pairs, wear distinctive uniforms with bright yellow shirts, and frequently ride bicycles. They focus their activities within the target area based on community response, their own observations, and crime analyses conducted by members of the unit, which combines official data obtained from headquarters with project-level information gathered by the officers and entered into desktop computer data bases. The output of this crime analysis activity now includes computer maps, as well as charts, lists, and bulletins.

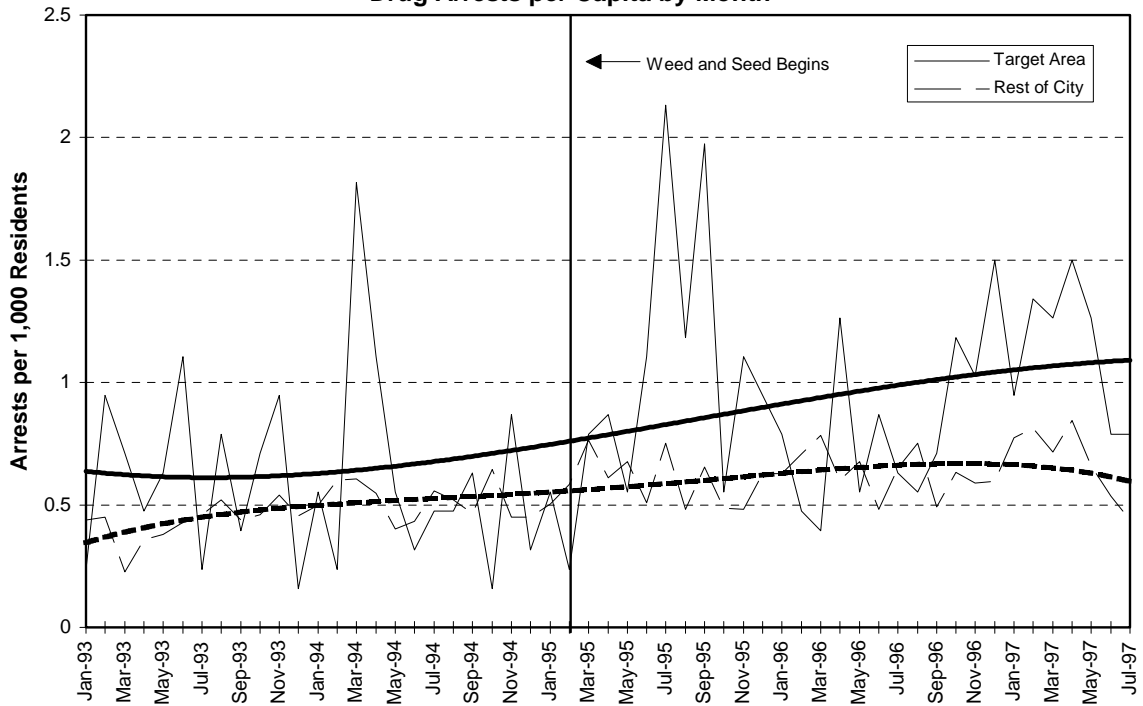
Weeding initially targeted burglaries, crack houses, and gun-related incidents. The area has a longstanding daytime burglary problem that resurfaces periodically; weeding officers primarily use bicycle patrol and informants to address the problem, as well as truancy enforcement. Drug problems continue, but the unit has been successful in closing down several crack houses with assistance from the Narcotics Division. Gun-related calls have also decreased. At one time the area averaged almost two per day—often, these were associated with activities in and around crack houses.

During the first 2 years of Weed and Seed, from February 1995 through January 1997, arrests for Part 1 crimes increased by an average of 11 percent over the previous 2 years, and drug arrests increased by an average of 48 percent. Exhibit 5.1 shows arrests for Part 1 crimes per capita by month, indicating continuously climbing arrest levels through Weed and Seed's second year (a total of 307 arrests versus 271 the year prior to Weed and Seed). Exhibit 5.2 shows drug-related arrests per capita by month, with drug arrests peaking in the first year of Weed and Seed at 155 arrests compared with 95 arrests the previous year.

**Exhibit 5.1**  
**Part 1 Arrests per Capita by Month**



**Exhibit 5.2**  
**Drug Arrests per Capita by Month**



The most sustained crackdown carried out in the target area was during the summer of 1995, when the Narcotics Division worked closely with weeding officers to target street corners and drug houses with informants, surveillance, zero tolerance, and saturation patrol. As a result, drug activity was significantly reduced in the area. Since that time, weeding officers have maintained close working relationships with the Narcotics Division, in part because (unlike most patrol officers) the weeding officers have informants who provide accurate and timely information. The weeding officers frequently engage in joint tactical operations with Federal law enforcement agencies and have established effective relationships with the DEA, ATF, and the U.S. Marshal's Service. The weeding staff have also been deputized as U.S. Marshals to facilitate their involvement in these joint tactical operations.

More recently, weeding efforts have shifted emphasis toward "quality-of-life issues" such as noise, public drinking, loitering, and truancy, to which weeding officers espouse a zero-tolerance approach. The weeding officers have also adopted the use of checkpoints in some instances to assert control over problematic locations, and they have addressed drug houses through such techniques as traffic enforcement and parking enforcement to deter customers and code enforcement to pressure a dwelling's occupants or owners.

A substantial amount of Shreveport's Weed and Seed grant funding has been allocated to police overtime. These funds have generally been used to provide directed and tactical patrols in the target area in the evenings and at night, after the weeding officers have gone off duty. The weeding officers do not interact much with these overtime patrols, but they credit them with maintaining the weeding officers' gains. At times during the course of the project, overtime funding has become depleted, resulting in a lack of after-hours coverage. During these periods, the weeding officers have felt that conditions began to deteriorate, due either to temporal displacement or inadequate around-the-clock pressure on street-level crime and disorder. With Weed and Seed and police department funds, the department acquired a 38-foot mobile police command center for deployment to different problem areas.

Project staff reported that while crime is down, calls for service are up as a result of the community's greater familiarity with, and confidence in, the police due to the weeding officers' efforts. (See section 6.1 for a discussion of crime data.)

### **Prosecution**

Neither Federal prosecutions nor targeted local prosecutions have resulted from Shreveport's Weed and Seed program. Although the original impetus for the city's Weed and Seed proposal came from the U.S. Attorney, no Federal prosecutions have been initiated, and there has been little substantial contact between weeding staff and the U.S. Attorney's Office. The few cases referred for Federal prosecution have either been declined or merely used as leverage to obtain further information from the suspect. The police department originally thought the criteria for Federal drug prosecutions (100 grams of crack cocaine or 2 kilos of powder cocaine) would be relaxed for Weed and Seed cases, but this did not occur. The U.S. Attorney resisted any lowering of the criteria on grounds of principle, as well as to prevent the district's sole Federal judge from becoming overwhelmed with less serious drug cases. The U.S. Attorney's Office takes the view that the kinds of cases being developed belong in State court.



Although Weed and Seed cases are specially stamped, local Weed and Seed prosecutions have been handled routinely, without any fast-tracking, vertical prosecution, or other special attention. Typically, this results in a plea bargain, with a sentence of probation. Local prosecutions have been hampered by inexperienced assistant district attorneys, crowded court dockets, and a preponderant use of probation, even for offenders already on probation, according to weeding officers. The general lack of effective prosecution and sentencing has frustrated weeding officers and was mentioned by several seeding providers and area residents as a major weakness of the program.

The district attorney's office takes the view that it does not have the resources to provide any extra effort for Weed and Seed cases and argues that it would be unfair to give undue attention to one area of the city or parish at the expense of another. The district attorney also points out inasmuch as Weed and Seed is a Federal program, and one that was initially pushed in Shreveport by the U.S. Attorney, more Federal prosecutions would seem to be appropriate.

The district attorney's unwillingness to devote any special attention to Weed and Seed cases may have been affected by the absence of any major grant funding for his office. Apparently, the district attorney's office was initially offered some grant money but declined to accept it, concluding the office would still lack sufficient resources to make the necessary prosecutorial and administrative changes needed to emphasize Weed and Seed cases. (Additional resources for prosecution would seem to be a reasonable consideration for this common shortcoming of enforcement-oriented programs that enhance police efforts on the front end but fail to support agencies that must process the increased arrests.)

To compensate for the overuse of probation, the weed team meets monthly with the State probation/parole office to catch people in violation of parole; each meeting results in several arrests, which leads to mandatory sentencing. The Weed and Seed steering committee, not including the U.S. Attorney, eventually wrote letters to district judges expressing the community's concern about the probation problem; the letters were received positively by the majority of judges, and several met with the steering committee to discuss this and related issues. In addition, a Drug Court was recently created in Shreveport, which may result in a more systematic approach to the prosecution and sentencing of drug cases, including those initiated from the Weed and Seed program.

## **5.6 Approach to Community Policing**

Shreveport's Weed and Seed program complemented community policing from the outset, since weeding officers were permanently assigned to the target area, patrolled primarily on bicycles, and quickly saw the necessity of getting to know neighborhood residents. Also, since they were co-located with seeding staff in the Weed and Seed office, they developed some familiarity with local service providers, neighborhood associations, and so forth.

Apart from Weed and Seed, the Shreveport Police Department's approach to community policing relied primarily on Community Liaison Officers and Neighborhood Assistance Teams. Each CLO handles a fairly large beat-sized area, providing community relations and problem-solving services as well as performing regular patrol duties. The NAT program focuses more specifically on improving police-community relations and is staffed by nonsworn coordinators. NAT activities typically include youth activities and prevention-oriented education.

The weeding officers' efforts seem to have represented the department's most systematic foray into community policing, especially as of early 1995, when the Weed and Seed program started. Not surprisingly, the officers have become popular in the target area, and their efforts have been widely appreciated. The officers are frequently asked to speak at public events. The officers have worked closely with neighborhood watch groups (attending meetings, offering advice and support) and helped form groups where none existed. They have also worked closely with the code enforcement officer to address various types of problems. The police sometimes escort the code enforcement officer to a dangerous location or use a code enforcement violation as a means of catching suspected criminals; the code enforcement officer likewise alerts police to suspicious areas. Residents who were questioned frequently expressed appreciation for the bicycle patrol and other weeding efforts to solve and deter crime problems in their neighborhoods. One resident, who lived on a block infested with drug dealers and burglars, said he worked closely with the weed patrol to build a solid case against the criminals; now his block is safe, well maintained, and attracting new residents.

Like many cities, Shreveport faces the question of how to replicate its target-area community policing effort citywide. Other neighborhoods have already clamored for bicycle patrols and a similar level of attention, but the police department does not feel it has the resources to make a similar investment throughout the city. With overly large beats, the CLO approach may be too diffuse to have a comparable impact, however, and the NAT approach is more seeding than weeding. The Shreveport Weed and Seed experience seems to demonstrate that communities benefit more from permanently assigned generalist police officers responsible for a whole range of problems and police duties than from any overlay of specialized community relations or problem-solving officers, just as schools seem to benefit more from full-fledged school resource officers than from mere Officer Friendly or drug education programs.

It should also be noted that Shreveport's Weed and Seed efforts represent a relatively modest step in the direction of full-scale community policing. Although the use of permanent assignment, reoriented operations, and positive interaction are characteristic of community policing, the weeding officers do not seem to have embraced as thoroughly such other central elements of community policing as problem solving, using all available resources to solve problems, and delegating responsibility for problem solving to line officers. Similarly, the weeding officers apparently have not integrated the regular patrol officers who cover the target area, as might have been hoped. In short, while the weeding officers' efforts have been commendable, the community policing bridge has been only partly constructed.

## **5.7 Approach to Seeding**

The widespread perception among service providers and neighborhood activists is that the Weed and Seed program provided a much-needed focus on the target area and a coordinating and organizing function for programs and services. Consequently, previously unavailable services have been provided, and existing services are better coordinated and enhanced. Also, communication among agencies and individuals active in the target area has improved.

A major seeding focus has been on youth activities, including safe havens, afterschool programs, and summer programs, as the needs assessment and risk factors analysis made youth activities the top priority. After a bumpy start, the three elementary schools located within the target area have become full participants in these activities, as well as such groups as Shreveport Community Renewal and the

Salvation Army. (See detailed descriptions of each program and provider interviews at the end of this section.)

Another aspect of the seeding effort has been to bring needed services into the target area. These efforts include the Shreve Memorial Library Bookmobile (which added the target area to its route at Weed and Seed's request), the Mobile Learning Lab, and the Shreveport Juvenile Justice Program. One of the most recent Weed and Seed collaborations is the Children's Advocacy Center for child abuse investigation and programs, which will open in the target area. This multijurisdictional facility was brought about through an agreement with 36 different agencies; Weed and Seed helped bring the parties together.

Numerous opportunities have been created for area residents to take advantage of existing programs and services through the Weed and Seed office at the Highland Center, including free immunizations from Shots for Tots. Weed and Seed publicizes such activities in its monthly calendar newsletter and through the media; Weed and Seed staff make effective use of the police department public relations office to publicize Weed and Seed activities and special target area events. Publicity and communication have been instrumental components of their efforts.

Seeding has also focused attention on neighborhood revitalization within the target area. Weed and Seed organized numerous neighborhood cleanups, gaining participation from community organizations (such as Shrevecorps), business associations, residents, and prison inmate workers. Weed and Seed linked Habitat for Humanity with qualified target area residents by providing marketing support and office space. In total, there have been 11 homes constructed in the target area.

Code enforcement has been one of the most consistent and ongoing revitalization efforts. Since its inception, Shreveport's Weed and Seed program has funded a code enforcement officer to concentrate his attention within the target area. As a result, such issues as overgrown weeds, abandoned and junk cars, abandoned houses, faulty drainage, and unsafe structures have been targeted much more extensively. The code enforcement officer attends community meetings and works closely with neighborhood groups, Weed and Seed staff, and the police in targeting his efforts.

### **Operational relationships with other organizations**

After a slow and rocky start, Shreveport's Weed and Seed program has developed good working relationships with important seeding organizations in the city and the target area. Initially, efforts to establish safe havens within three elementary schools fell apart due to poor communication and failure to pay teachers for their services in a timely manner. (As discussed, the original seed coordinator was a volunteer who also ran the safe havens.) This led to a mutual consent among Weed and Seed staff, the Caddo Parish School Board, Youth Enrichment programs, and the U.S. Attorney's Office to halt program activities.

Since the appointment of the current, full-time seed coordinator, relationships have improved. The seed coordinator herself participates in a variety of community activities, such as school improvement councils, a children's advocacy center, a business corridor association, the citizens' police academy, a neighborhood association, the symphony orchestra outreach committee, and the Pew Charitable Trust task force. The seed coordinator was honored for "demonstrating outstanding service to the community" by the Caddo Community Action Agency.

## **Seeding program descriptions and provider interviews**

Below is a description of the various seeding programs, including those funded by Weed and Seed to provide contracted services and those who partner with Weed and Seed for various services and projects. Eight current program partners were interviewed in person, mostly in a group, and one former provider was interviewed by telephone; their comments are included with the descriptions of their programs. Some of them also shared their perceptions of Weed and Seed and its effects; these comments are included at the end of this section.

### **Providers contracted by Weed and Seed**

The following organizations are contracted by Weed and Seed to provide seeding programs in the target area in the current fiscal year, 1997–98.

#### ***Youth Enrichment Plus (YEP)*** ***1997–98 funding: \$81,634***

YEP has received Weed and Seed funding since January 1996. The Weed and Seed funding allowed YEP to operate free afterschool programs at three local elementary schools. Participants are in the first through third grades. YEP could not have set up those sites without the funding.

As a result of Weed and Seed, YEP has served more than 100 children each semester. The YEP summer camp, also funded by Weed and Seed, served 60 children last summer. Because of the Weed and Seed summer camp curriculum, several children caught up academically and were not held back a grade as the principal had intended.

According to the YEP director, test scores and school records generally show marked improvement for YEP students, and their behavior improves as they do better in school. Because the intervention is targeted to the critical age when reading skills are acquired, the director felt improving the students' reading skills would affect them the rest of their lives. They would perform better in school and would not be held back.

Now that she has a proven program, the director felt confident she would receive funding to continue the programs after Weed and Seed funding ends.

### ***Shreveport Community Renewal (SCR)***

***1997–98 funding: \$29,205***

Weed and Seed enabled SCR to open a site in Highland and saved them a year of fund raising. Weed and Seed funded most of the expenses of the day-to-day program. SCR Kids Club is a safe haven program for children. SCR purchases a “Friendship House” in an at-risk neighborhood and offers afterschool and weekend programs for children. The youth leader and her family live in the home and are available to participating children in the neighborhood.

The youth leader assists the children with homework and deals with moral and behavioral issues. She also organizes weekend activities, including volunteer work. Her goal is to create a continuum of care for each child in the program so they are cared for by the same people at church, home, school, and Kids Club. The youth leader works with the schools, and teachers call to tell her if one of her children misbehaves in class. She said it is difficult to involve the parents of these at-risk children. At the first parents’ orientation meeting, no parents came, but at the last meeting, more than 60 parents attended; because the children enjoy it so much, they make their parents come, according to the youth leader. She said many children who once had behavioral problems no longer act out.

### ***The Salvation Army***

***1997–98 funding: \$20,000***

The Salvation Army uses Weed and Seed funding to provide afterschool and summer programs for youths, ages 5 to 14, in the target area. Twenty-five to fifty youngsters in need of supervision and enrichment are selected with the coordination of local schools. The program focuses on homework, recreation, and conflict resolution skills.

### ***Shreveport Juvenile Justice Prevention Program***

***1997–98 funding: \$6,000***

Weed and Seed provides funding for teaching materials for this weekly course on violence and crime prevention for 60 fifth-grade students. During an observation visit, the teacher taught a class session about feelings, recognizing and controlling anger, and learning how to express feelings constructively. The class consisted of learning disabled students with behavioral problems; as conflicts erupted in class, the students had ample material with which to practice the lessons and demonstrate learning.

### **Providers formerly contracted by Weed and Seed**

The following provider was contracted by Weed and Seed to provide services in previous years.

#### ***North Louisiana Teamworks (NLT)***

Weed and Seed helped fund the North Louisiana Teamworks (NLT) 1996 and 1997 summer track-and-field and literacy program in the target area; because of Weed and Seed funding, services were extended to youths in Highland and Stoner Hill. The program provided at-risk children of the target area neighborhoods a summer program that taught violence prevention, conflict mediation, and literacy skills. The NLT director felt that the children were provided with positive role models and literacy rates improved. In total, the program served approximately 500 children last summer.

Approximately 5 percent of NLT's funding came from Weed and Seed, according to the NLT director. Since it is no longer funded by Weed and Seed, NLT has aggressively sought additional funding; it has been successful in replacing most of that funding, even though its fundraising season is not yet completed.

### **Weed and Seed partnerships (nonfunded)**

Weed and Seed works with many nonprofit and public organizations, which are not funded by Weed and Seed, to provide more services and programs for the target area. Weed and Seed helps coordinate the activities of such organizations in the target area, solicit their participation in projects, and publicize these events and services. Weed and Seed has a strong capacity for public outreach due to its location at a community center (Highland Center), its full-time staff, the relationships and programs it has established in the community, and its effective use of media. Such outreach benefits target both area residents and participating organizations. Program partnerships include:

#### ***Shots for Tots, Louisiana State Department of Public Health***

At the request of Weed and Seed, the state department of public health brought its Shots for Tots free immunization program to the target area. The Shots for Tots mobile unit provides services at the Weed and Seed office at the Highland Center, and Weed and Seed publicizes their visits.

#### ***Shreve Memorial Library Bookmobile***

Weed and Seed arranged for the bookmobile to come to the Highland Center each month because there is no permanent public library in the neighborhood and promoting reading is an important part of the Weed and Seed youth and crime prevention strategy. Weed and Seed publicizes the bookmobile's scheduled visits, and patrons can make book requests ahead of time. There has been a good and growing turnout. Bookmobile librarians get to know the patrons' interests.

#### ***Mobile Learning Lab***

The Mobile Learning Lab comes to the Highland Center once a week to offer computer training to neighborhood residents. The lab is not funded by Weed and Seed, but Weed and Seed asked it to include the target area on its route and publicizes the lab's program to neighborhood residents. There are 10 computers in the van, with computer-assisted learning and an instructor. Some students work toward their GED, and others learn software packages for job preparation. Classes are well attended, with up to 10 students per visit. The average student attends the free lessons for 4 to 6 months.

#### ***Shrevecorps***

Part of the national Americorps youth service program, Shrevecorps has a youth corps, ages 16 to 24, who volunteer their services to the community. Shrevecorps has partnered with Weed and Seed on many projects, providing youth volunteers for neighborhood cleanups and tutoring children at the YEP afterschool program.

### *Habitat for Humanity*

Weed and Seed helped Habitat for Humanity reach potential homeowners. Many qualified people did not know about the program, and it was difficult for Habitat to find qualified applicants. Weed and Seed staff helped with outreach in the target area, and Habitat has already served three families referred by Weed and Seed.

### *Shreveport Symphony Orchestra*

At Weed and Seed's request, the orchestra has given free concerts in the target area at the Highland Center. Weed and Seed drew several hundred children and senior citizens to the special concerts. The seed coordinator also worked on the orchestra's outreach committee. The symphony is looking to do similar outreach in other areas.

### **Provider comments on Weed and Seed**

Program partners emphasized how Weed and Seed increased coordination and communications links among neighborhood groups and other agencies. Weed and Seed brings more programs under one roof and helps programs reach an underserved area of Shreveport. One partner emphasized the importance of leadership in the community and the role played by Weed and Seed. It was noted that Weed and Seed also promotes awareness of community programs and resources through such vehicles as its monthly calendar of events. The director of Shreveport said, "Establishing partnerships is the key to Weed and Seed—cooperation on projects and working together to bring the community together. [You] can touch more people as a group of organizations than as a single entity. That's very, very important."

Some of the partners who were funded by Weed and Seed, including Youth Enrichment Plus, SRC Kids Club, and NLT indicated Weed and Seed support will help secure other grants because of their proven program successes under the Weed and Seed grant, as well as the Weed and Seed association.

The NLT director felt Weed and Seed enhanced her organization's capacity, leading to a tightening of the way the organization was run. The administrators used the site sponsored by Weed and Seed as a pilot program, combining track and field and literacy programs at one site. The NLT director believes the experience her organization gained during the Weed and Seed grant process also put it in a good position to request and receive other Federal funding.

The only negative aspect noted by one provider was because the money was administered by the city, there were a number of "hoops to jump through" to receive it.

## 5.8 Concluding Observations

Stakeholders and community leaders generally say the target areas have improved as a result of Weed and Seed. They credit the program with focusing attention on the target communities and coordinating both policing and seeding responses. They cite:

1. Improved neighborhood appearance due to code enforcement and neighborhood cleanups.
2. Reduced crime and drug dealing.
3. Increased availability of direct Weed and Seed-funded services and other services brought into the target area.
4. Economic revitalization in the form of lower vacancy rates and increased residential construction, residential rehabilitation, and business activity.

Perhaps the clearest lesson from Shreveport's Weed and Seed program is that a city can influence its most crime- and drug-ridden neighborhoods with a relatively modest investment in policing and seeding services. Apparently, the permanent assignment of just a few police officers and a code enforcement officer to the target communities in late 1994, and then the introduction of several youth-oriented programs starting in 1995 and 1996, has had an observable impact on crime, disorder, and economic vitality in the area. The Weed and Seed program and staff were the "glue" that held these initiatives together, got them publicized, obtained citizen input and participation, and helped coordinate them with other activities in the target communities.

Another lesson relates to prosecution. On one hand, Shreveport achieved a degree of success without much cooperation or support from either Federal or local prosecution. This suggests weeding and community policing activities can have their own independent effects apart from any deterrence or incapacitation achieved through prosecution and adjudication of arrestees. At the same time, Shreveport's experience clearly demonstrates prosecutorial participation in Weed and Seed cannot be taken for granted. Other cities are likely to be in the same situation as Shreveport regarding Federal prosecutions—the types of cases made by Weed and Seed officers rarely meet Federal criteria (especially those governing quantities of drugs or firearms seized) and a shortage of Federal judges and prosecutors therefore makes Federal prosecution unlikely. Similarly, local prosecutors in other cities may feel, as the district attorney does in Shreveport, that it is either inappropriate or politically unwise to allocate disproportionate resources to one targeted area, thus reducing the attention given to other areas. In Shreveport's case, at least, it is possible this problem might have been overcome if grant funds had been allocated for extra local prosecution. In any event, more thorough and focused prosecution might have increased the impact of Weed and Seed in the target communities.

Another lesson verified in Shreveport is the advantage of targeting communities that already have active community-based organizations. For the most part, Weed and Seed in Shreveport did not have to start out by organizing the community but rather had to secure the participation of existing organizations and associations. These groups often have competing agendas and interests, of course, so that working with them can be frustrating and challenging. Their existence makes the identification



of key stakeholders easier and makes timely implementation of community-based services more probable.

The Shreveport case also demonstrates that a police department can succeed as a Weed and Seed grant recipient. Although it continues to feel like a major stretch for police department officials, seeding has become a full partner in Shreveport's Weed and Seed program and is developing well. Nonpolice program directors have been appointed twice in Shreveport, both have performed poorly, and each time the police department has stepped in and fulfilled the program director's responsibilities. The program has enjoyed stability and full implementation when the police department has been at the helm. Internally, the police department's management also lent authority to the seeding side, facilitating coordination of weeding with seeding.

Finally, Shreveport's program highlights the value of full-time, dedicated Weed and Seed staff. Much of the success of Shreveport's effort has been due to: (1) the presence of a staffed Weed and Seed office in the target area, (2) the permanent assignment of a weeding coordinator and several weeding police officers to the program (and perhaps to their distinctive uniforms and use of bicycles), and (3) the efforts of the full-time seed coordinator. These program characteristics gave it a degree of substance and presence and a sense of permanence in the target communities that almost certainly contributed to its successful implementation and apparent impact.

## **6.0 Effects of Weed and Seed**

### **6.1 Analysis of Crime Data**

Incident-level data provided by the Shreveport Police Department was used to analyze the trends in crime rates before and after the implementation of Weed and Seed. In interpreting these data, it is important to note any observed changes in crime rates in the target area during this time period might reflect factors other than Weed and Seed. For instance, changes in crime reporting may cause the reported crime rates to rise or fall independent of any shift in the true crime incidence. Changes in the regional or national economic context may also affect local crime trends. Additionally, an observed reduction in crime for the target area may occur through displacement of crime to adjacent or nearby areas, where crime rates would rise.

District identifiers in the incident-level crime data were used to identify crime incidents reported in the Highland-Stoner Hill target area. The rest of the city provides a logical comparison area, to take account of possible changes in local crime reporting, shifts in local economic conditions or other contextual factors, and the possibility of crime displacement to other areas within the city.

Shreveport implemented its weeding program in February 1995. Exhibit 6.1 displays the number of Part 1 crimes per 1,000 residents in the target area and in the rest of the city from February 1993 to July 1997—a period spanning more than 2 years before and after the commencement of Weed and Seed.<sup>12</sup>

**Exhibit 6.1**  
**Part 1 Crime Data, Shreveport**

Time period	Total number of Part 1 crimes	Average Monthly Part 1 crimes per 1,000 residents	Percentage change from preceding year
<b>Highland-Stoner Hill area</b>			
2/93–1/94	2,254	14.8	—
2/94–1/95	2,681	17.6	<b>+18.9</b>
2/95–1/96	2,426	16.0	<b>-9.5</b>
2/96–1/97	2,384	15.7	<b>-1.7</b>
<b>2/97–7/97 (6 months)</b>	1,020	13.4	—
<b>Rest of City</b>			
2/93–1/94	20,936	9.5	—
2/94–1/95	22,709	10.2	+8.5
2/95–1/96	20,668	9.3	-9.0
2/96–1/97	21,991	9.9	+6.4
<b>2/97–7/97 (6 months)</b>	9,633	8.7	—

Source: Statistics generated from incident-level crime data provided by the Shreveport Police Department.

Note: The Weed and Seed program was implemented in the Highland-Stoner Hill target area beginning February 1995.

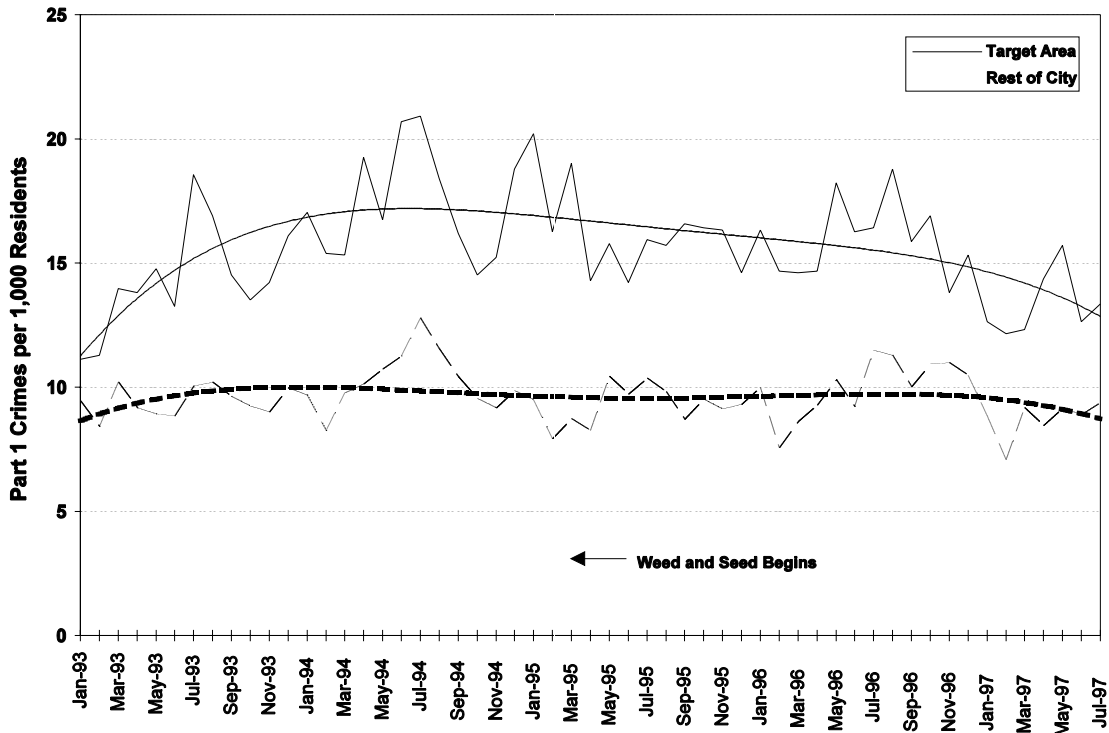
Since the implementation of Weed and Seed, Part 1 crimes have been on a downward trend in the target area. In the year prior to Weed and Seed—February 1994 through January 1995—Part 1 crime was rising in the target area, having increased an average of 18.9 percent from the previous year; in the rest of the city, Part 1 crime increased 8.5 percent during the same period.

After the first year of Weed and Seed—February 1995 through January 1996—Part 1 crimes dropped by an average of 9.5 percent in the target area and an average of 9 percent in the rest of the city. In the second year of the program, the Weed and Seed target area experienced a further decline of 1.7 percent over the prior year, while the rest of the city experienced a 6.4 percent increase in crime.

Exhibit 6.2 displays monthly Part 1 crime rates per 1,000 residents in the target area and the rest of the city. The bold fitted curve expresses the trends over the entire period analyzed (February 1993–July 1997). The data again suggest a decline and stabilization of Part 1 crime in the target area following the commencement of Weed and Seed, indicating an overall trend toward greater convergence in crime levels between the target area and the rest of the city.

<sup>12</sup> It should be noted these crime statistics differ slightly from official Shreveport Police Department figures reported to the FBI; the data provided here do not take into account cases determined through further investigation to be unfounded.

**Exhibit 6.2**  
**Part 1 Crimes per Capita by Month**



## 6.2 Survey of Community Residents

### Survey methods used in 1995 and 1997

In each of the eight sites participating in the national evaluation, a survey of target area residents was conducted at two separate time intervals. During March through July 1995, the Institute for Social Analysis conducted 1,531 interviews among the eight sites. In December 1997 through January 1998, Abt Associates conducted a total of 1,995 interviews with a separate group of residents in the same eight target areas. In the following material, we refer to these data collection efforts as the 1995 and 1997 surveys.

### General survey design and operations

The objective of the survey data collection and analysis was to measure the changes in citizens' awareness of the Weed and Seed program and their opinions about police activity, crime, public safety, and the general quality of life in their neighborhoods. In the interest of comparing the findings obtained from the two surveys, the 1997 survey was designed with the following features:

- For each site, the geographical boundaries of the survey area were the same in 1995 and 1997.
- The verbatim wording of questions from the 1995 survey was retained in 1997. For selected items, additional response categories were added in 1997 to provide a more complete range of possible responses. For these items, care was taken in the analysis to

aggregate responses in ways that would preserve the comparability of the findings in 1995 and 1997.<sup>13</sup>

There were also some notable differences in the methods used in the two surveys, as follows:

- The 1995 survey consisted of inperson interviews, based on city-provided address lists. The 1997 interviews were conducted by telephone, based on listed telephone numbers for residential addresses within the survey area.
- The 1995 survey consisted of 83 substantive items. The 1997 survey included only a subset of these, 31 substantive items. (For both surveys, the count excludes items related to respondent demographic characteristics and other basic interview data.) The 1995 interviews required 30 to 40 minutes. The 1997 interviews typically lasted 12 to 15 minutes.

The decision to proceed in 1997 with telephone interviewing and a shortened instrument was based on the difficulties experienced in 1995 in completing the targeted number of 400 interviews per site. In none of the sites was this target reached. The 1997 survey design called for 300 completed interviews per site. In 6 of the 8 sites, all but Hartford and Manatee, 300 or more interviews were completed.

Selected survey findings are listed below; please see the corresponding exhibits for detailed information, including the survey questions, response patterns, and statistical significance.

#### ***Demographic characteristics of survey respondents (Exhibit 6.3)***

- In 1997, survey respondents were older and disproportionately female or black, compared with 1995 respondents. The average age in 1997 was 49, an increase from 42 years old in 1995.
- Generally, survey respondents lived in the target area for more than 2 years.
- Incidence of unemployment decreased among respondents, from 10 percent in 1995 to 4 percent in 1997.
- Survey respondent households typically consisted of 1 or 2 adults with an average of 0.7 and 0.9 children in 1997 and 1995, respectively. In 1997, the racial composition of respondents was 58 percent white and 35 percent black and, in 1995, 73 percent white, 23 percent black.

#### ***Perceptions of the neighborhood (Exhibit 6.4)***

---

13 For example, in questions on “how good a job are the police doing” in different aspects of law enforcement, the 1995 survey allowed the respondent to indicate “a very good job, a good job, a fair job, or a poor job.” The 1997 survey allowed the respondent to also indicate “a very poor job.” The findings presented have aggregated the “poor job” and “very poor job” responses for 1997 before comparing the pattern of responses with 1995.

- In general, the level of neighborhood satisfaction among respondents had not increased significantly in the 2 years since the 1995 survey, particularly in perceptions of crime as being a significant problem.
- Although perceptions of violent crime and gang activity as a “big problem” decreased slightly, respondent concerns of illegal activity in the neighborhood, such as drug use, increased.
- Nonetheless, in 1997, 17 percent more of respondents said the neighborhood had become a better place to live in the past 2 years.

***Victimization (Exhibit 6.5)***

- Although incidences of victimization remained about the same across survey years, 5 percent fewer people reported having something stolen (from themselves or from a family member) by force or threat of force.

***Police response (Exhibit 6.6)***

- Fifteen percent more of respondents in 1997 felt the police were doing a “very good job” in “controlling the street sale and use of illegal drugs;” the differences between the responses to the remaining survey questions in this section were insignificant. There was no change in perceptions of police visibility or police responsiveness to community concerns. (It should be noted that perceptions of police responsiveness were already high in 1995.)

***Community involvement (Exhibit 6.7)***

- In general, the target area has seen a spike in community involvement. Reported participation in neighborhood watch programs increased 17 percent from 1995 levels, and participation in neighborhood cleanup projects increased by 9 percent in 1997.

***Perceptions of social services and other programs (Exhibit 6.8)***

- Perhaps the best indication of seeding success in Shreveport was the high respondent satisfaction with neighborhood social services and economic opportunities. Those claiming to be “very satisfied” were at least 10 percent more in 1997 in each of the following city services: “the availability of sports, recreation, and other programs for youths” (8 percent in 1995 versus 21 percent in 1997); “the availability of drug treatment services” (9 percent in 1995 versus 22 percent in 1997); and “the availability of job opportunities” (5 percent in 1995 versus 17 percent in 1997).

***Perceptions of the Weed and Seed program (Exhibit 6.9)***

- The percentage of respondents recognizing the Weed and Seed program by name increased from 49 percent in 1995 to 85 percent in 1997. Although perceived police presence was relatively unchanged since 1995, there was wide recognition of the “bicycle police patrol,” with a full 83 percent of respondents aware of its existence in

1997. Sixty-two percent of 1997 respondents were aware that police officers are available to work with neighborhood crime watch groups, and 37 percent knew of “police help with neighborhood cleanup efforts.” More than half of all 1997 respondents were aware of the “afterschool educational programs for children through Youth Enrichment Plus, Shreveport Community Renewal Kids Club, and the Salvation Army” (53 percent), and “public neighborhood meetings hosted by the Weed and Seed program” (56 percent).

### **General observations on the survey findings**

While survey findings do not show much change in perceptions of safety, there were improvements in perceptions of other aspects of neighborhood life, including better police control of street sales and use of illegal drugs; strong increase in satisfaction with programs available in the neighborhood, including youth programs; and an increase in participation in community programs, such as neighborhood watches and cleanups. While reported levels of neighborhood satisfaction did not change, 17 percent more respondents perceived improvement in quality of life over the 2-year period.

In interpreting the survey findings, it would be incorrect to attribute the observed changes solely to Weed and Seed. The measured changes may, in part, be the result of the different survey methods used in 1995 and 1997. It is also important to remember that Weed and Seed was first implemented in Shreveport several months prior to the first survey. Finally, although the observed changes in residents’ attitudes may indeed have resulted from Weed and Seed and various community changes set in motion by the program, other factors, such as the national economy, may also have influenced changes.

**Exhibit 6.3: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents  
Shreveport**

	<b>1995 Survey<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>1997 Survey<sup>a</sup></b>
<i>Age of respondent (in years)</i>	n = 104	n = 303
18–29	31 (30%)	53 (18%)
30–39	24 (23%)	42 (14%)
40–49	16 (15%)	68 (22%)
50–59	5 (5%)	35 (12%)
60 or older	25 (24%)	99 (33%)
Other	3 (3%)	6 (2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mean Value (in years)</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>48.9</b>
<i>Employment status</i>	n = 104 <sup>b</sup>	n = 303 <sup>b</sup>
Working full time	36	129
Working part time	6	45
Unemployed and looking for work	10	13
Retired or otherwise not looking for work	15	92
Homemaker	13	178
Disabled	3	52
Full-time student	4	23
Part-time student	0	18
Other	37	22
Refused	0	1
Don't know	0	1
<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>2.5</b>

**Exhibit 6.3: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents  
Shreveport**

	<b>1995 Survey<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>1997 Survey<sup>a</sup></b>
<i>Number of people in household less than 18 years old</i>	n =104	n =303
0	53 (52%)	205 (68%)
1–2	37 (36%)	66 (22%)
3 or more	12 (12%)	32 (11%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.7</b>
<i>Number of people in household more than 18 years old</i>	n =104	n =303
0	6 (6%)	3 (1%)
1–2	82 (79%)	247 (82%)
3 or more	16 (15%)	53 (18%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<i>Ethnic identity</i>	n =104	n =303
Black	24 (23%)	106 (35%)
White	76 (73%)	177 (58%)
Hispanic	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	1 (1%)	4 (1%)
American Indian	0 (0%)	2 (<1%)
Something else	0 (0%)	6 (2%)
Refused	2 (2%)	5 (2%)
Don't know	0 (0%)	2 (<1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.7</b>



**Exhibit 6.3: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents  
Shreveport**

	<b>1995 Survey<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>1997 Survey<sup>a</sup></b>
<i>Gender</i>	n =104	n =303
Male	45 (43%)	116 (38%)
Female	58 (56%)	186 (61%)
Other	1 (1%)	1 (<1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mean Value</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>

<sup>a</sup> Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

<sup>b</sup> Respondents were allowed to make more than one selection.

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with this neighborhood as a place to live?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Very satisfied	46 (44%)	126 (42%)	
Somewhat satisfied	41 (39%)	131 (43%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied	10 (10%)	28 (9%)	
Very dissatisfied	6 (6%)	16 (5%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1(<1%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>In general, how safe do you feel out alone in this neighborhood during the day? Do you feel...</i>	n =104	n = 303	$\chi^2 = \text{***}$
Very safe	61 (59%)	128 (42%)	
Somewhat safe	31 (30%)	144 (48%)	
Somewhat unsafe	7 (7%)	22 (7%)	
Very unsafe	4 (4%)	7 (2%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	2 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>In general, how safe do you feel out alone in this neighborhood after dark? Do you feel...</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Very safe	21 (20%)	44 (15%)	
Somewhat safe	35 (34%)	107 (35%)	
Somewhat unsafe	19 (18%)	76 (25%)	
Very unsafe	16 (15%)	36 (12%)	
Don't go out at night	12 (12%)	39 (13%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>In general, in the past 2 years, would you say this neighborhood has become a better place to live, a worse place to live, or stayed about the same?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^{2***}$
Better	21 (20%)	113 (37%)	
Worse	22 (21%)	43 (14%)	
About the same	41 (39%)	143 (47%)	
Did not live here 2 years ago	20 (19%)	3 (1%)	
Don't know	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>Do you think drug dealers on the streets, or in other public places, are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Big problem	18 (17%)	50 (17%)	
Small problem	16 (15%)	100 (33%)	
No problem	56 (54%)	132 (44%)	
Don't know	14 (14%)	21 (7%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>Do you think drug sales out of homes or apartments are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Big problem	18 (17%)	63 (21%)	
Small problem	8 (8%)	90 (30%)	
No problem	50 (48%)	28 (27%)	
Don't know	28 (27%)	51 (17%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>Do you think burglary and other property crimes are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Big problem	23 (22%)	72 (24%)	
Small problem	29 (28%)	135 (45%)	
No problem	49 (47%)	84 (28%)	
Don't know	3 (3%)	12 (4%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>Do you think robbery and other street crimes are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Big problem	17 (16%)	51 (17%)	
Small problem	21 (20%)	130 (43%)	
No problem	62 (60%)	111 (37%)	
Don't know	4 (4%)	11 (4%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>Do you think violent crimes, such as shootings, assault, and so forth, are a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Big problem	22 (21%)	56 (19%)	
Small problem	16 (15%)	128 (42%)	
No problem	60 (58%)	111 (37%)	
Don't know	6 (6%)	8 (3%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>Do you think gang activity is a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Big problem	16 (15%)	40 (13%)	
Small problem	15 (14%)	99 (33%)	
No problem	58 (56%)	139 (46%)	
Don't know	15 (14%)	25 (8%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Exhibit 6.4: Perceptions of the Neighborhood  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>Do you think drug use is a big problem, small problem, or no problem in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Big problem	18 (17%)	77 (25%)	
Small problem	11 (11%)	101 (33%)	
No problem	55 (53%)	88 (29%)	
Don't know	20 (19%)	35 (12%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

<sup>a</sup> Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

<sup>b</sup> Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

\*\*\* Statistically significant at 1-percent level

\*\* Statistically significant at 5-percent level

\* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.5: Victimization  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>In the past 2 years, has anyone broken into your home, garage, or another building on your property in this neighborhood to steal something?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	29 (28%)	78 (26%)	
No	71 (68%)	225 (74%)	
Don't know	4 (4%)	0 (0%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>In the past 2 years, has anyone stolen something from you or a member of your family by force or by threat of force in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = *$
Yes	10 (10%)	14 (5%)	
No	90 (87%)	288 (95%)	
Don't know	4 (4%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	



**Exhibit 6.5: Victimization  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>Other than the incidents already mentioned, in the past 2 years, have you or a member of your family been beaten up, attacked, or hit with something such as a rock or bottle in this neighborhood?</i>	<b>n = 104</b>	<b>n = 303</b>	<b>x<sup>2</sup> = n.s.</b>
Yes	4 (4%)	11 (4%)	
No	98 (94%)	291 (96%)	
Don't know	2 (2%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>Other than the incidents already mentioned, in the past 2 years, have you or a member of your family been knifed, shot at, or attacked with some other weapon by anyone at all in this neighborhood to steal something?</i>	n =104	n =303	x <sup>2</sup> = n.s.
Yes	5 (5%)	6 (2%)	
No	97 (93%)	295 (97%)	
Don't know	2 (2%)	2 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

<sup>a</sup> Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

<sup>b</sup> Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

\*\*\* Statistically significant at 1-percent level

\*\* Statistically significant at 5-percent level

\* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.6: Police Response  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>In general, how good a job are the police doing to keep order on the streets and sidewalks in this neighborhood? Would you say they are doing a...</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Very good job	26 (25%)	110 (36%)	
Good job	51 (49%)	126 (42%)	
Fair job	23 (22%)	52 (17%)	
Poor job	3 (3%)	9 (3%)	
Very poor job	Not a response category	3 (1%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	3 (1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>How good a job are the police doing in controlling the street sale and use of illegal drugs in this neighborhood these days? Would you say they are doing a...</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = **$
Very good job	17 (16%)	94 (31%)	
Good job	37 (36%)	110 (36%)	
Fair job	21 (20%)	43 (14%)	
Poor job	10 (10%)	15 (5%)	
Very poor job	Not a response category	10 (3%)	
Don't know	19 (18%)	31 (10%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Exhibit 6.6: Police Response  
Shreveport**

	<b>1995 Survey<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>1997 Survey<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Chi Square Statistic<sup>b</sup></b>
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police car driving through your neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	98 (94%)	280 (92%)	
No	5 (5%)	21 (7%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	2 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police officer walking around or standing on patrol in the neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	20 (19%)	71 (23%)	
No	83 (80%)	230 (76%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police officer patrolling in the back alleys or in the back of buildings in your neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	39 (38%)	107 (35%)	
No	64 (62%)	191 (63%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	5 (2%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Exhibit 6.6: Police Response  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>During the past month, have you seen a police officer chatting/having a friendly conversation with people in the neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	35 (34%)	117 (39%)	
No	68 (65%)	185 (61%)	
Don't know	1 (1%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>In general, how responsive are the police in this neighborhood to community concerns? Are they...</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Very responsive	56 (54%)	166 (55%)	
Somewhat responsive	36 (35%)	99 (33%)	
Somewhat unresponsive	3 (3%)	10 (3%)	
Very unresponsive	5 (5%)	7 (2%)	
Don't know	4 (4%)	19 (6%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	2 (<1%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

<sup>a</sup> Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

<sup>b</sup> Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

\*\*\* Statistically significant at 1-percent level

\*\* Statistically significant at 5-percent level

\* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.7: Community Involvement  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in an antidrug rally, vigil, or march in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n = 303	$\chi^2 = \text{n.s.}$
Yes	4 (4%)	12 (4%)	
No	96 (92%)	291 (96%)	
Don't know	4 (4%)	0 (0%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in a citizen patrol in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = **$
Yes	2 (2%)	26 (9%)	
No	98 (94%)	276 (91%)	
Don't know	4 (4%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in a neighborhood watch program in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Yes	18 (17%)	103 (34%)	
No	83 (80%)	199 (66%)	
Don't know	3 (3%)	1 (<1%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Exhibit 6.7: Community Involvement  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>During the past 2 years, have you attended or participated in a neighborhood cleanup project in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = *$
Yes	15 (14%)	71 (23%)	
No	86 (83%)	232 (77%)	
Don't know	3 (3%)	0 (0%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

<sup>a</sup> Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

<sup>b</sup> Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

- \*\*\* Statistically significant at 1-percent level
- \*\* Statistically significant at 5-percent level
- \* Statistically significant at 10-percent level
- n.s. Not statistically significant

**Exhibit 6.8: Perceptions of Social Services and Other Programs  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with the availability of sports, recreation, and other programs for youths in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Very satisfied	8 (8%)	62 (21%)	
Somewhat satisfied	21 (20%)	99 (33%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied	13 (13%)	50 (17%)	
Very dissatisfied	19 (18%)	41 (14%)	
Don't know	43 (41%)	47 (16%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with the availability of drug treatment services in this neighborhood?</i>	n =104	n =303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Very satisfied	9 (9%)	67 (22%)	
Somewhat satisfied	26 (25%)	86 (28%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied	6 (6%)	28 (9%)	
Very dissatisfied	7 (7%)	18 (6%)	
Don't know	56 (54%)	102 (34%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	2 (<1%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Exhibit 6.8: Perceptions of Social Services and Other Programs  
Shreveport**

	1995 Survey <sup>a</sup>	1997 Survey <sup>a</sup>	Chi Square Statistic <sup>b</sup>
<i>In general, how satisfied are you with the availability of job opportunities in this neighborhood?</i>	n = 104	n =303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Very satisfied	5 (5%)	51 (17%)	
Somewhat satisfied	28 (27%)	84 (28%)	
Somewhat dissatisfied	13 (13%)	52 (17%)	
Very dissatisfied	21 (20%)	48 (16%)	
Don't know	37 (36%)	67 (22%)	
Refused	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

<sup>a</sup> Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

<sup>b</sup> Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

\*\*\* Statistically significant at 1-percent level

\*\* Statistically significant at 5-percent level

\* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant



**Exhibit 6.9: Perceptions of the Weed and Seed Program  
Shreveport**

	<b>1995 Survey<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>1997 Survey<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Chi Square Statistic<sup>b</sup></b>
<i>Have you heard of a program called the Weed and Seed program?</i>	n=104	n = 303	$\chi^2 = ***$
Yes	51 (49%)	256 (85%)	
No	51 (49%)	46 (15%)	
Don't Know	2 (2%)	1 (<1%)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**1997 Respondents only <sup>a</sup>**

<i>Are you aware the following programs are available in this neighborhood?</i>	Yes	No	Don't know	<b>n = 303 Total</b>
Bicycle police patrol	251 (83%)	52 (17%)	0 (0%)	<b>100%</b>
Police officers who work with the neighborhood watch group	189 (62%)	108 (36%)	6 (2%)	<b>100%</b>
Police help with neighborhood cleanup efforts	113 (37%)	186 (61%)	4 (1%)	<b>100%</b>
Afterschool educational programs for children through Youth Enrichment Plus, Shreveport Community Renewal Kids Club, and Salvation Army.	160 (53%)	138 (46%)	4 (1%)	<b>100%</b>
Public neighborhood meetings hosted by the Weed and Seed Program.	170 (56%)	130 (43%)	3 (1%)	<b>100%</b>

<sup>a</sup> Columns may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

<sup>b</sup> Significance of differences between 1995 and 1997 in the distribution of responses for each survey question.

\*\*\* Statistically significant at 1-percent level

\*\* Statistically significant at 5-percent level

\* Statistically significant at 10-percent level

n.s. Not statistically significant

## 6.3 Seeding Program Participant Interviews

To learn the perspective of individuals in the community who were direct beneficiaries of seeding programs, group interviews were conducted with nearly 30 participants of four seeding programs. Programs included Youth Enrichment Plus programs at two local schools, the Shreveport Community Renewal Kids Club, and the Dillard-Robinson Neighborhood Watch Group. In addition, the evaluator attended one of the monthly open neighborhood meetings hosted by Weed and Seed and addressed questions from an audience of approximately 20 people. Their comments are included at the end of this section.

It is important to note the seeding program participant interviews are not intended to represent all participants; interviewees were selected at the discretion of program managers, based on their availability. Nonetheless, participants' perceptions, described below, illustrate the types of benefits the programs confer and convey the participants' feelings about their experiences.

In general, participants reported the following types of benefits from program participation:

- **Afterschool programs.** Participants felt these programs improved their school performance, broadly enhanced their education, enhanced their social development and social support through constructive activities with peers and teachers, and provided adult supervision.
- **Neighborhood Watch.** Participants reported the watch program increased their feelings of safety and sense of control over their environment, aided in crime prevention, and improved neighborhood appearance. Weed and Seed staff helped guide their efforts and enabled them to receive increased support from the police department and city.
- **Weed and Seed monthly neighborhood meeting attendees.** Attendees generally reported that Weed and Seed increased police vigilance, support, and crime solving in problem areas; improved neighborhood appearance; and increased communication between the police and residents. They felt that Weed and Seed staff, including the bicycle patrol, increased police availability and support for resolving neighborhood issues. While residents felt safer with Weed and Seed, they expressed concern that the neighborhood may revert back to the higher crime levels when Weed and Seed ends.

Below is a detailed summary of the participant interviews.

### **Youth Enrichment Plus (YEP), Barret Elementary School**

Eight third-graders took part in the Youth Enrichment Plus (YEP) participant interviews at Barret Elementary School. Weed and Seed provides the funding so there is no charge to these students who otherwise could not afford to participate.

The children were very eager to talk about the activities at YEP. They described a variety of activities, including homework assistance, outside play, reading, drawing, singing, and eating snacks. Each day they do their homework before they are allowed to go outside or play; they said the teachers, Ms. J. and Ms. M., help them with their homework. The children expressed great

enthusiasm for all the activities, including doing the homework. One girl said, “Your teachers love you.” Another said she only missed YEP once because of a high fever.

When asked what was most important to them about the program, most participants said the homework assistance. The children felt YEP helped their performance in school, including getting better grades. One child said, “[They] make sure you do your homework; if you don’t, you can get in trouble. At home, my mama, she don’t never help me.” The children seemed pleased with having the discipline and structure, as well as the comradery. One liked having “someplace good to go.” In addition to homework, they enjoyed the play activities and occasional field trips, including outings to the Red River, a fire station, and an ambulance. It was also clear they felt happy and secure at the program; as one student said, “Miss J. [our teacher] loves us.”

When asked what they would do if they didn’t come to this afterschool program, the children insisted they would find a way to come; they seemed unwilling to entertain the idea of not coming. As one girl said, “You can get mad [if there’s no spot for you]. [You] wait your turn to come to the program and, if Ms. J. says your name, then you get to come.” Another said, “You do your homework and wait till someone else drops out. They’ll call my mom when there’s a space.” One girl said, “If you are at home, your sister won’t never help you. She says I got my own homework to do.”

When asked why they joined the program, some children said they came because no one is home after school. Another child thought he would be bored at home; he had lots of friends in the afterschool program. One child said the teacher recommended it to her, and another child’s mother suggested it.

When asked how their friends or relatives would describe how the program benefits them, the students indicated the program is good for their grades, helps people do their work, and helps their families. Asked if there is enough to do in the neighborhood, those who replied said no. It was clear these teachers and this program filled an important role in the students’ lives.

None of the students had any suggestions on how to change the program or could describe anything they didn’t like.

### **Youth Enrichment Plus at Creswell Elementary School**

Ten third-graders attended this participant interview. Some of the students came to the program every day while others came 2 days per week.

The reaction of the Creswell Elementary School students was similar to that of the Barret children. They described similar activities, including homework assistance, getting treats, writing exercises, drawing, reading, and going outside. They were highly enthusiastic about the activities, including doing homework, which was included among the favorite activities. As one boy said, “I like doing everything at YEP....Because my Mom says, whatever you do...you can learn from that.... I try to listen as much as I can so when I grow up, I’ll know as much as I need to know.” When asked how YEP affects their families, they said it helps them do their homework and do better in school. One child said, “I like doing work—I like doing everything.”

When asked why they come, students said to learn and eat snacks. If they didn’t come to YEP, they said they would probably watch TV, sit around the house, or sleep. When asked whose idea it was to

join, one girl said, “My idea...Bobby told me it seemed exciting.... He blurted it out even. I told my mom as soon as I got home.” In another case, the teacher recommended it to the student.

As with the other YEP program, none of the children could think of anything they did not like about it or would change.

Asked what they would tell others about the program, one student said, “If I were you, I would come to this program because we learn lots of stuff. We come every day and we have snacks...and we have so much fun.”

### **Shreveport Community Renewal Kids Club**

The Kids Club offers afterschool and weekend enrichment activities for elementary school-age children. Activities are based at the youth leader’s home, located in the neighborhood, and the youth leader is accessible to the children 24 hours a day.

Twelve students, from grades two to six, were interviewed as a group. As with the other groups, these students were also highly enthusiastic about their activities. They said they have fun, do homework, play games, read Bible stories together, and have Service Saturdays and Super Saturdays. Most students come on 2 or 3 weekdays after school and participate in special activities every other Saturday. The children do community volunteer work, such as projects with the children at Shriner’s Hospital or collecting canned goods, on Service Saturdays. On Super Saturdays, they take field trips, such as going fishing or visiting historic sites. The program also includes summer activities.

When asked what they like best, the children said seeing their friends, having something to do, and getting help with their homework. Some children said there wasn’t much to do at home, or their parents work. They also come to have fun and play games. They enjoy the reward of the Super Saturday outings for doing good work and volunteer service. They said they also liked doing volunteer work, such as helping the children at the hospital. When asked what they learn from Service Saturday, many children replied, “responsibility.” They said they learn by helping.

### **Neighborhood watch group**

Seven members of the Robinson-Dillard Neighborhood Watch Group attended the monthly meeting and participated in the group interview afterward. Most of the participants have lived in the neighborhood for many years; one woman was a business owner in the neighborhood. The Watch was founded 1 year ago by a resident who has lived in the area for more than 30 years. She was influential in getting other neighbors to join.

When the watch first started, the police department helped participants organize themselves; later, some of the Weed and Seed bicycle policemen came. Residents said the police encouraged watches, and the residents decided that because they are responsible for their own neighborhood, it would be good to know who their neighbors were. “[That way] we could say [to a stranger], you don’t belong in this neighborhood, and we’re going to keep an eye on you.” The residents wanted to feel secure and get guidelines from the police department on what to look for and how to protect their homes. They wanted to be proactive in prevention because crime was increasing in the surrounding areas.

The group meets at least once a month to see if there are problems in the neighborhood, and they hold block parties at least twice a year. They keep each other informed of what is happening in the neighborhood. They watch each other's houses and have a list of everyone's work, home, and alternate phone numbers so people can be reached if there is a problem at their house. If something appears wrong, residents call the police and try to reach the owner. As one person said, "[There's] not a whole lot of us but, for a little group, I think we do a lot."

The business owner, who has a printing press, prints a notice for the monthly meetings. They have ongoing neighborhood problems that are a subject at every meeting. In addition to reacting to specific neighborhood problems, they instigate neighborhood cleanups and address needed services, such as lighting.

### *Perceived effects*

The group feels they are slowly making an impact in the neighborhood. They said it takes persistence and Weed and Seed is there to help them. Some of the problem neighbors are conforming better; they do not participate but are less troublesome. "[We] make a point to meet every month even if things are quiet so problem neighbors see we're still organized. When you accept the status quo, then pretty soon it cycles back around to the bad." They noted the legal system is slow to get rid of bad neighbors. They have succeeded in having empty houses torn down. Most importantly, they feel safer now, and they know their neighbors now so it is easier to notice something strange.

The business owner also said she has seen improvements. She had been nervous about moving back into the area because there were more problems in the Highland section than when she left. Now, with the watch, she feels much more comfortable. "Highland had a bad reputation for crime. I think that's changing."

The biggest challenge for the group has been controlling people handling illegal narcotics on the street. There is a building on the block where drug dealers live, but the police have not yet had success in catching them with the drugs. The participants felt the dealers would eventually get caught because they were watching them.

### *Role of Weed and Seed in the neighborhood watch*

Weed and Seed has been involved with their neighborhood watch since the beginning, with a Weed and Seed staff member usually attending their meetings and offering advice. "Without them [the seed coordinator and police officer], we wouldn't have our neighborhood to the point we have it now." With Weed and Seed, they have a liaison who knows who to call in the city and community; sometimes the seed coordinator handles problems for them directly for faster resolution. They felt Weed and Seed had worked hard for them and helped to cut through red tape. With Weed and Seed, they feel they have someone to call for help and know they will be heard—not just someone who takes a message and does not respond. They are more inclined to call when they know someone personally and have contacts at the neighborhood level.

One woman said that, the year before, she had horrible neighbors who left trash, including abandoned cars, everywhere in their yard. She called Weed and Seed and the seed coordinator took a picture of the house and wrote the landlord in Florida. The problem was fixed.

Participants had heard of Weed and Seed through the media. There had been some initial negative media coverage. Their experience, through the Watch, has been positive, and they wanted to give their support to the program and the seed coordinator for her efforts. Participants in the Watch see more police officers around now who are more aware of the problems and more attached to the community. They said Weed and Seed makes them feel safer.

### **Weed and Seed monthly neighborhood meeting**

The Weed and Seed monthly neighborhood meeting took place in the chapel at the Highland Center. A police officer talked about truancy, and an attorney from the Shreveport court talked about the teen court and juvenile justice program. Approximately 20 people attended. Following the meeting, the evaluator asked the group about their impressions of Weed and Seed.

### ***How attendees found out about Weed and Seed***

Attendees seemed familiar with the Weed and Seed goals and felt there was high awareness of the program. Many attendees had seen the Weed patrol. One resident had high crime on his block and had called Weed and Seed for help, and another had called Weed and Seed to report suspicious activity. Several residents learned about Weed and Seed through the schools.

### ***Perceived benefits***

Attendees felt strongly the Weed and Seed outreach was helpful and communication with the police is better. They felt more comfortable calling and getting a response. They felt Weed and Seed had improved perceptions of safety.

One man said his block used to have a severe drug and crime problem, but he turned the block around by working closely with Weed and Seed. The drug dealers and burglars are now gone from his street. He kept calling the lieutenant who is the weed coordinator. They proceeded carefully to build a solid case against the suspects, who had already served time in jail. The citizen was unable to get his neighbors to participate but succeeded, nonetheless, with the help of Weed and Seed. Now he feels safe to go out again. He said the codes are enforced now, too.

An 80-year-old woman in the audience said Weed and Seed has cleared vacant lots, old cars, and trash. Her neighborhood is now kept clean.

One attendee noted the economy was better and crime had decreased. It was pointed out that Weed and Seed helped improve the perception of crime so people were willing to invest in the community again. Before, Highland had a higher vacancy rate. A member of a local neighborhood watch gave credit to Weed and Seed for definite improvement in the neighborhood.

### ***Concerns***

Comments were made that Weed and Seed provides good police presence in the daytime, but it's gone in the evening. People want more protection at night. The resident manager of the public housing project expressed a desire for more services at the project because of her concern about gangs. (Some attendees commented that in years past the housing project had worse crime and no one wanted to live in this area; there were drive-by shootings, rapes, and robberies.) Another resident

manager of a low-income project said he would like more police presence to inhibit gang members, drug dealers, and loitering. He expressed concern that many offenders who went to jail quickly returned to the streets.

Another attendee recommended residents call in more often to report suspicious activity or someone not belonging on their street. “You got to live there...people living there have to do something themselves.” The resident managers said loitering is a low priority for the police. The resident who had been helped by Weed and Seed said, “Give them time, and it will work...you need to keep calling.”

Concern was expressed that when Weed and Seed ends, crime will return.

## **7.0 Future Directions and Degree of Institutionalization**

Due to its delayed start in program implementation, Shreveport’s Weed and Seed program will continue through FY 1998. The site applied for designation as a Weed and Seed training site.

It is unclear which program elements may remain after Federal Weed and Seed funding ends or what the long-term institutional effects may be.<sup>14</sup> Two incremental gains from Weed and Seed will likely continue after funding ends: strengthened community capacity to address problems and to coordinate solutions and increased citizen involvement.

Weed and Seed program elements are likely to continue include:

- Increased citizen involvement in law enforcement, with more citizens active in neighborhood watch programs, increased cooperation with the police, and strengthened channels of communication between citizens and the police. (According to the 1997 survey, 85 percent of respondents were aware of Weed and Seed and 56 percent were aware of the monthly neighborhood meetings hosted by Weed and Seed; participation in neighborhood watches increased from 17 to 34 percent, and 62 percent of respondents were aware of the availability of police to assist in neighborhood watches.)
- Increased participation of community organizations on a variety of neighborhood issues and increased coordination of services. Weed and Seed worked closely with neighborhood-based and other nonprofit organizations, contributing to strengthened organizational networks and organizational capacity. In the area of neighborhood restoration, for example, community organizations, residents, and public resources were effectively mobilized for neighborhood cleanups and code enforcement. After Weed and Seed funding ends, there will be no dedicated funding for a full-time code enforcement officer for the target area, and some of the current levels of vigilance will decline. Since the community broadly participated in this effort and has seen results, however, it seems likely that at least some of these gains would continue; in particular, two neighborhood

---

14 A subcommittee of the steering committee is appealing to the mayor’s office and elected officials to provide local funding after Federal funding ends.

organizations worked closely with Weed and Seed on this issue and can maintain some oversight. (The 1997 survey also reflected increased participation in neighborhood cleanups, from 14 to 23 percent, and increased satisfaction with programs serving the neighborhood.)

- Afterschool/safe haven programs for youths. (In the 1997 survey, 53 percent of respondents were aware of these afterschool programs.) Weed and Seed enabled five afterschool/safe haven programs to be implemented and, while future funding arrangements have not yet been determined, the providers expressed confidence in their ability to secure other sources of funding. In addition, the Weed and Seed afterschool programs and other related activities (including summer activities and parenting classes) are being developed into a citywide initiative called “Kid Power”; funding is being sought from the U.S. Department of Education.
- A place for the Weed and Seed strategy to continue. The Shreveport program operated out of a community center, which afforded Weed and Seed a place in which to bring outside services to the target area (such as the public health vaccinations, orchestra performances, and bookmobile visits). Having a place for Weed and Seed provided a focused and convenient way for residents and community organizations to have a voice. The police department now plans to have community centers in each of its four areas and will keep the current Weed and Seed site as that area’s center.

Program elements with uncertain lasting impact include:

- The Weed bicycle patrol. It is unclear whether the bicycle patrol will continue at current levels in the target area after Weed and Seed funding ends. Without a dedicated bicycle patrol, some of the gains in community relations and crime vigilance would be lost. The new mobile police command center can be used for targeted deterrence and enforcement, but the community-building component and proactive strategies will be diminished. (In the 1997 survey, 83 percent of respondents were aware of the bicycle patrol.) On the other hand, area residents expect more service and have become more active on their own behalf so they may continue to demand police attention for problems. Furthermore, some of the more entrenched criminal activity has been shaken loose, allowing for more neighborhood restoration.

Program elements that seem least enduring without Weed and Seed funding include:

- Community policing oriented activities. While the police department is committed to having a community oriented policing program, with the decrease in staff funding from Weed and Seed and the end of integration of community policing with seeding, community policing activities will likely suffer in the target area. The Shreveport Police Department is exploring ways to sustain some of these activities and emulate Weed and Seed in other patrol areas. They are considering reorganizing and consolidating the existing Community Liaison Officers and Neighborhood Assistance Teams to fulfill weeding and seeding functions in each of the patrol areas under the command of area captains.



Beyond the reduction in resources, the key challenges to be addressed in the transition following Weed and Seed will be coordination and leadership once there are no longer dedicated Weed and Seed staff.

## About the National Institute of Justice

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), a component of the Office of Justice Programs, is the research agency of the U.S. Department of Justice. Created by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended, NIJ is authorized to support research, evaluation, and demonstration programs, development of technology, and both national and international information dissemination. Specific mandates of the Act direct NIJ to:

- Sponsor special projects, and research and development programs, that will improve and strengthen the criminal justice system and reduce or prevent crime.
- Conduct national demonstration projects that employ innovative or promising approaches for improving criminal justice.
- Develop new technologies to fight crime and improve criminal justice.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of criminal justice programs and identify programs that promise to be successful if continued or repeated.
- Recommend actions that can be taken by Federal, State, and local governments as well as by private organizations to improve criminal justice.
- Carry out research on criminal behavior.
- Develop new methods of crime prevention and reduction of crime and delinquency.

In recent years, NIJ has greatly expanded its initiatives, the result of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (the Crime Act), partnerships with other Federal agencies and private foundations, advances in technology, and a new international focus. Some examples of these new initiatives:

- New research and evaluation are exploring key issues in community policing, violence against women, sentencing reforms, and specialized courts such as drug courts.
- Dual-use technologies are being developed to support national defense and local law enforcement needs.
- The causes, treatment, and prevention of violence against women and violence within the family are being investigated in cooperation with several agencies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- NIJ's links with the international community are being strengthened through membership in the United Nations network of criminological institutes; participation in developing the U.N. Criminal Justice Information Network; initiation of UNOJUST (U.N. Online Justice Clearinghouse), which electronically links the institutes to the U.N. network; and establishment of an NIJ International Center.
- The NIJ-administered criminal justice information clearinghouse, the world's largest, has improved its online capability.
- The Institute's Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) program has been expanded and enhanced. Renamed ADAM (Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring), the program will increase the number of drug-testing sites, and its role as a "platform" for studying drug-related crime will grow.
- NIJ's new Crime Mapping Research Center will provide training in computer mapping technology, collect and archive geocoded crime data, and develop analytic software.
- The Institute's program of intramural research has been expanded and enhanced.

The Institute Director, who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, establishes the Institute's objectives, guided by the priorities of the Office of Justice Programs, the Department of Justice, and the needs of the criminal justice field. The Institute actively solicits the views of criminal justice professionals and researchers in the continuing search for answers that inform public policymaking in crime and justice.