

Solicitation for a Research Partner for the Seattle COMPASS (Community Mapping, Analysis, and Planning for Safety Strategies) Initiative

Due Date: January 7, 2000

Funding Amount: \$275,000 for two years

In recent years we have observed a shift in local juvenile and criminal justice policy development toward a more collaborative, strategic approach that relies on analyzing the nature of public safety problems to develop strategic interventions to reduce them. This approach is supported by timely, accurate, multi-disciplinary, automated data with a geographic reference. Jurisdictions that have developed such data systems, analytic capacity, and collaborative partnerships have experienced great success in reducing crime and addressing public safety problems.

In the interest of promoting this approach for the development of juvenile and criminal justice policy and practice, the National Institute of Justice, in partnership with the Office of Justice Programs, has launched a new initiative called COMPASS. COMPASS has four components: (1) a collaborative policy group spanning a broad array of city agencies and community interests; (2) a comprehensive data infrastructure that will house a broad set of data collected from a variety of sources (crime incident, public safety, demographic, social and environmental data); (3) strategic analysis of data both spatially and temporally through the use of a user-friendly information system; (4) a research partner (or consortium of partners) to assist in the analysis of data, the development of interventions, and to provide on-going feedback on the outcomes and impacts of interventions.

Building a Collaborative Effort

The COMPASS initiative will be managed by a local team housed in the Seattle Mayor's office. This team will be responsible for convening six existing groups of policy makers that will serve as the Interagency Leadership Committee and also convening an Interagency Technical Team who will serve as primary developers of the data warehouse that will be assembled during the first year of the initiative. This group includes the following representatives: mayor, chief of police, prosecuting attorney, US attorney, Administrative Judge of the Criminal Court, representatives of Juvenile and Adult Corrections, Pretrial Services Agency, Probation, and Parole, Defense Bar, Social Service Agencies, School Officials, local research partner(s), COMPASS staff, and National Institute of Justice (NIJ) staff.

The Interagency Leadership Committee will be the primary users of the data center. In concert with the local research partner, this committee will analyze the data to identify public safety problems and develop hypotheses about their causes. This analysis will then guide the development of strategies to address local public safety problems. This committee, with the assistance of their research partner, will then monitor the

implementation of initiatives, and routinely observe various indicators to determine the impact of the intervention on public safety problems.

Development of a Data Center

One of the core elements of the COMPASS initiative is the creation of a data infrastructure which contains information from a variety of sources. These data will include extant social indicator data (e.g., employment statistics; housing information; land use data; school data; hospital records; asset mapping) and a host of safety information (e.g., incident-based crime data; arrest statistics; calls for service; court and corrections data; victimization surveys; and fear of crime data). Additional information on community risk and protective factors will be developed through special surveys administered at the local level. The exact structure of the data infrastructure will be determined by the local COMPASS team. Several models are possible. The data infrastructure may be developed to enable each participating agency to access the shared data from the system via a secure intranet (or internet) environment. It could also be structured so that the research partners acts as a liaison between the system and its users, providing analysis of data to the partner agencies. Other models will also be considered by the data contractor and the local COMPASS team.

Strategic Analysis of Data

The analytic strength of COMPASS lies in the wealth of data and the ability to analyze relationships among key indicators. One analytic tool with which this is done is GIS (Geographic Information Systems), which can be used to analyze and visualize the incidence of crime and other factors spatially. GIS can also be used to develop and test models of hypothesized relationships among factors. For example, are youth shoplifting after school? Are the assaults concentrated around bars at night or around schools at the time of students' dismissal? Are drug dealers selling in front of a poorly lighted public housing project? Examination of these types of relationships will permit development of data-driven problem-solving strategies that can be implemented in a targeted fashion. GIS can also be used to assess the impact of interventions over time as well as investigation unanticipated outcomes (e.g., identifying crime displacement).

Research and Evaluation Support

As indicated above, the research partner (or consortium of partners) represents a key participant in the COMPASS initiative. As such, we envision several different functions for the local researcher partner(s) including (1) assisting in the strategic development of the local data infrastructure; (2) analyzing data to identify public safety problems; (3) informing the development of interventions to address crime problems with relevant research on 'what works', best practices, and promising approaches; (4) documenting the process of the Seattle COMPASS initiative; and, (5) providing on-going feedback on the impact of interventions.

1) Provide input to the strategic development of local data infrastructure. A separate data contractor will be responsible for the technical development of the data warehouse including such items as: (1) assessing data/information needs; (2) conducting a data resources survey; (3) creating a database design; and, (4) ensuring security. The role of the research partner(s) is to provide input to ensure that data sources fulfill the ultimate purpose of COMPASS (using diverse data to identify and understand complex public safety problems and to develop collaborative interventions that address these problems). Therefore, it will be critical for the research partner(s) to ensure that the data structure support cross-disciplinary problem identification, interventions, and outcome analysis.

Further, the research partner(s) will be responsible for working with the data contractor to ensure that the resulting data infrastructure is created in such a way to allow for the development of solutions to complex methodological problems such as: combining data sources, creating a common unit of analysis, defining temporal ordering, and developing comparison groups. The research partner will be responsible for working with the data contractor to develop a data base that combines information from a variety of sources into a single analytic structure capable of being manipulated by standard analytic techniques (e.g., SPSS, SAS, Archview).

In addition, while most of the data that will be used to develop the COMPASS data infrastructure will come from participating agencies and existing databases, we do expect the research partner(s) to identify and develop new data for the system possibly including community surveys on local victimization, neighborhood fear levels, community risk and protective factors, community satisfaction, community attitudes, formal and informal interviews with local criminal justice actors, etc. The research partner(s) will be responsible for identifying these critical missing data sources and developing and administering local surveys to collect such data.

2) Provide analytic support to COMPASS problem-solving efforts. Once the database is developed, the COMPASS team will have the capacity to analyze relationships among key indicators. The research partner(s) is expected to lead this analysis to enable the collaborating agencies to identify key public safety problems affecting the city and understand potential causal factors. In addition, the research partner(s) should assess the impact of the problem on the community, the community interest and degree of support for the inquiry, the concreteness of the problem statement, and the potential for success in recommending priorities for the city.

3) Assist in the development of research-based strategies to address public safety problems. Once the problem has been precisely defined and analyzed, the COMPASS team will begin designing intervention strategies. The role for the research partner in this effort is to assist collaborating agencies develop interventions that target identified crime problems. The research partner will be responsible for the collection of information regarding various strategies that have been successful elsewhere. These will include crime control strategies, methods for controlling disorder and targeting deterrence, and various initiatives and programs seen to be effective (those discussed, for example, in the Maryland "What Works" report – Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's

Promising and the "BLUEPRINTS" project in Colorado – Blueprints for Violence Prevention series. The knowledge gained from this review should be used to develop research-based interventions and strategies to address targeted public safety problems.

4) **Documenting the process.** Another role of the research partner(s) is to document the on-going implementation of COMPASS in Seattle. This should include such items as: (1) information on the nature of COMPASS team working relationships; (2) variables which contribute and/or detract from sound cooperative and successful relationships; (3) factors which ensure adequate and appropriate data availability, access, and analysis; (4) types of strategies that are effective in addressing crime problems; (5) the influence of external factors on the activity of the team; and, (6) factors that influence the team's ability to implement designated strategies. The research partner(s) should include in their proposal a plan for documenting this process.

5) **Provide on-going feedback to the COMPASS team on the impact of selected interventions.** Once the intervention has been implemented, it is the role of the COMPASS team and the research partner(s) in particular to observe the intervention and related data carefully, monitor changes in key indicators, and recommend adjustments to improve the success of the intervention. This feedback loop is to be on-going. Using this "on-going feedback model", the COMPASS team can make strategic adjustments to the intervention strategy to ensure that the selected interventions adhere to a specific model as closely as possible. The research partner(s) should be comfortable relaying assessment information to the COMPASS team on a continuous basis and should continue to assist the COMPASS team partners to refine interventions until intended results are achieved. It is also important that the research partner(s) consider possible additional measures of success. These measures could include a host of other factors such as community satisfaction with the system, assessment of satisfaction levels of participating personnel, etc.

Qualifications of Research Team/Consortium:

A qualified research partner(s) will have the following: 1) a Ph.D. in criminal justice, sociology, public policy, or a related discipline or equivalent in work experience; 2) evidence of understanding, ability, or experience in the areas of: data infrastructure development and analysis; local survey development and administration; development of collaborative, problem-solving approaches; action research models; and program evaluation and assessment; and 3) demonstrated understanding/experience working with jurisdictions (including city officials, criminal justice practitioners, and community members) in a collaborative, problem-solving relationship. Considering the variety of skills needed, researchers are encouraged to partner with others as necessary to fulfill requirements of COMPASS model.

Submission Information:

- Submit of letter of intent to NIJ by December 17, 1999.

- Concept papers should be no more than twenty pages, and should include a statement demonstrating an understanding of the COMPASS model and the role of the research partner in its development, a statement describing past experience with similar initiatives, a time and task plan for implementing the five core research roles described above, and a statement of organizational qualifications. Concept papers should be submitted by January 7, 2000.

Send letters and concept paper to:
COMPASS Initiative
National Institute of Justice
810 7th St. NW
Washington, DC, 20531 (Fed Ex zip is 20001)

- If you have issues for which you would like clarification as you are writing your concept paper, you may contact Laura Winterfield (202-616-3482; email winterfi@ojp.usdoj.gov) or Erin Dalton (202-514-5752; email daltona@ojp.usdoj.gov).

Selection Criteria:

- **Responsiveness of proposal to COMPASS model.**
- **Quality (e.g., comprehensiveness and clarity) of proposal.**
- **History of successful coordinated efforts with local practitioners and policy makers.**
- **Qualifications of key staff.**
- **Demonstrated ability to manage proposed initiative.**
- **Soundness of plans for implementation.**

Review Process:

- **Review at NIJ internally by at least three readers.**
- **Review by Seattle COMPASS team by at least three readers.**
- **Joint interviews (NIJ staff and Seattle COMPASS team staff) with candidates deemed highly competitive by the review process.**
- **Make funding decisions by February 11, 2000.**