



COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

Successful Practices & Strategies

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Madison Police Department

Madison, Wisconsin

www.cityofmadison.com/police

Community policing element

Community partnerships

Problem/issue

Recidivism among violent offenders

Problem description

Repeat violent offenders account for a significant percentage of overall criminal activity in Madison's communities.

Community policing strategies implemented

The mission of the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of the Madison Police Department (MPD) is to reduce crime, fear, and disorder through a coordinated and sustainable intelligence-driven model that identifies the most violent repeat and high-profile criminals in the community and disrupts their offending through focused deterrence. The SIU, working with the community, strives to change the offenders' behavior by specifically focusing on them through monitoring and support and establishing clear expectations with them.

All the partner law enforcement agencies, along with the Community Against Violence (CAV) partners, participate in an impartial candidate selection process, which is vital to the law enforcement–community collaboration. Similarly, all the partnering agencies collaborate to hold notification call-ins for the repeat violent offenders, who are offered support services to help with employment, housing, their mental health, and mentoring but who are also warned that repeat violence and criminal behavior will result in the full attention of law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges.

Follow-up includes case management and support services from CAV partners, as well as “trust but verify” attention from SIU detectives, who accompany corrections officers in probation and parole home visits. SIU detectives gather intelligence and conduct criminal investigations when necessary.



Change and/or impact as a result of these community policing efforts

One and half years into the focused deterrence program, the SIU has seen a reduction in crime among the targeted offenders. None of the offenders have had weapons violations, while four have returned to prison. The fact that there have only been eight new victims is also considered a success. This is based on the following notification statistics of the first 40 offenders in the program:

- Total Charges: 1325
- Total Felony Convictions: 295
- Total Misdemeanor Convictions: 387
- Total Number of Victims: 391

To date, the MPD has not received any information that any of the offenders have been involved with recent weapons offenses.

Many of the notified offenders are receiving assistance from community resource providers, who handle intake and assessment and proactive field work by contacting notified offenders who are not asking for help on their own.

The fundamental philosophy is that the focused deterrence program is driven by the community and not by law enforcement. The MDP continues to promote this and inform community members that their moral voice is paramount for any success to be realized. This is an on-going goal, and key themes are accountability and legitimacy in order to foster public trust. The media has covered SIU offender stories, and the input from the public has been favorable.

Two of the notified offenders committed new acts of domestic violence. Through the coordinated efforts of SIU, corrections agents, and the district attorney's office, the cases were intensely investigated and brought to trial. The offenders were ultimately convicted and sentenced to prison. Had the SIU not been in place, the offenders likely would not have been held accountable for their acts of violence, and the victims would likely be exposed to continued acts of domestic violence.

"I support the Special Investigations Unit.... This is evidence-based policing.... I watched the video where you were offered services to get help, and you chose not to accept them."

– Circuit Court Judge Stephen Ehlke upon sentencing Emon Hollins to 13 years in prison, originating from two misdemeanor charges

At the most recent notification call-in, three offenders currently in the focused deterrence program told the just-notified repeat violent offenders about the opportunity they are being given and that they can turn their lives around if they accept the help of the community.



Lessons learned through program implementation

To create a collaborative, successful focused deterrence program, the MPD Special Investigations Unit did the following:

- Define the mission of the unit and community partners.
- Emphasis that this approach is driven by community demands and is not a law enforcement initiative.
- Define distinction between the roles of law enforcement and community resource providers; police cannot oversee the resource providers.
- Must have buy-in/support from the executive leadership of the implementing law enforcement agency.
- Identify key stakeholders, from the community, to resource providers, to law enforcement and corrections.
- Meet in person with these stakeholders' agency heads, and get their buy in and support.
- Define the goal of program, such as "success equals reduction the in number of victims in the community."
- Establish key partnerships with corrections, the district attorney, and the United States Attorney.
- Maintain transparency with the community and media on how the MPD formed the SIU and made selections.
- Have an adequate public venue for the notifications—enough space.
- Continue to promote the approach by meeting with community members.
- Keep good stats on offenders' progress.
- Establish monthly meetings with community partners.
- Establish a communication network system to track offenders that both law enforcement and resource providers can use cooperatively.

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