

# **Weed and Seed Local Evaluation Meta Analysis**

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By the



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## Introduction and Executive Summary

The Executive Office for Weed and Seed (EOWS) has distributed millions of dollars in Federal support to distressed communities throughout the United States since 1991. With a mission that focuses crime intervention and prevention efforts into some of the nation's most crime ridden areas, Weed and Seed has a large stake in assuring programmatic effectiveness. At it's most dramatic, the effectiveness of Weed and Seed programs can be a matter of life and death - by eliminating crime and disorder, including elimination of the drug trade and attendant violence, violent crime, gang activity, and homicide.

It is at this most basic level - life and death - that EOWS has developed an annual measure of effectiveness. Through reporting for the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), Weed and Seed sites report trends in homicide for both their target area, and for the encompassing jurisdiction. No program of this size should rely on only one measure of effectiveness, however and over the years, EOWS has actively pursued multiple approaches for developing evaluation information on the effectiveness and promise of the Weed and Seed strategy. This has included nationally directed evaluation efforts as well as locally initiated studies.

Other recent national efforts include a crime pattern data collection project that solicits crime data from grantees for crimes that are the priority of an individual site. Collected for a six year period, which includes statistics preceding project implementation and for several years afterwards, this data will help show the degree to which grantees impact those crimes that are their communities' major concerns as identified in their Weed and Seed strategies. The Performance Indicators project, also currently underway, relies on geo-spatial analysis to shed light on program effectiveness.

EOWS encourages local evaluation efforts in addition to these national efforts, providing resources and technical assistance for sites to conduct proper evaluations. Some of the fruit of these efforts is presented in this summary of local Weed and Seed evaluation. Though of varying degrees of complexity and with findings that are not universal, these studies add to the body of work developed to explore the effectiveness of the Weed and Seed strategy at both the local and national level. Because of the wide scope of many local Weed and Seed strategies, it is often not feasible with the available resources to examine all aspects of a local site's activities to the same depth. Consequently, some variations across these studies are due to the specific focus of individual investigators.

This meta analysis reviews and summarizes:

- 34 separate reports assessing local Weed and Seed sites/activities (including ones study for all Weed and Seed sites in the state of Virginia)
- Studies from 24 states. States with the most studies include...
  - Pennsylvania and Wisconsin with 3 studies apiece
  - Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Nevada, Ohio, and Washington with 2 studies apiece

- Studies were published in the following years...

Year	-	Number of Studies Published
○ 1997	-	5
○ 1998	-	1
○ 1999	-	13
○ 2000	-	8
○ 2001	-	1
○ 2002	-	4
○ 2003	-	2
- Multiple studies over time for 4 jurisdictions

As previously stated, these evaluations have been conducted for both local use and national level assessments and as such lose some of their comparability. All these studies, however, attempt to determine the effect of Weed and Seed efforts on local communities.

Overall, the evaluations have generally found significant improvements in community crime conditions, residents' attitudes were positive regarding changes occurring in the target areas, and increased interagency coordination and cooperation through participation in the Weed and Seed strategy. Because local sites may be addressing a broad range of crime, social, educational, housing, and economic development issues, their progress can be affected by many organizational development concerns, institutional barriers, and funding limits that less comprehensive efforts do not contend with. Several studies have noted instances where such difficulties may have prevented or delayed full implementation of planned strategies. Despite the challenges of this complexity, local sites can often show substantial progress in some objectives while making inroads in others.

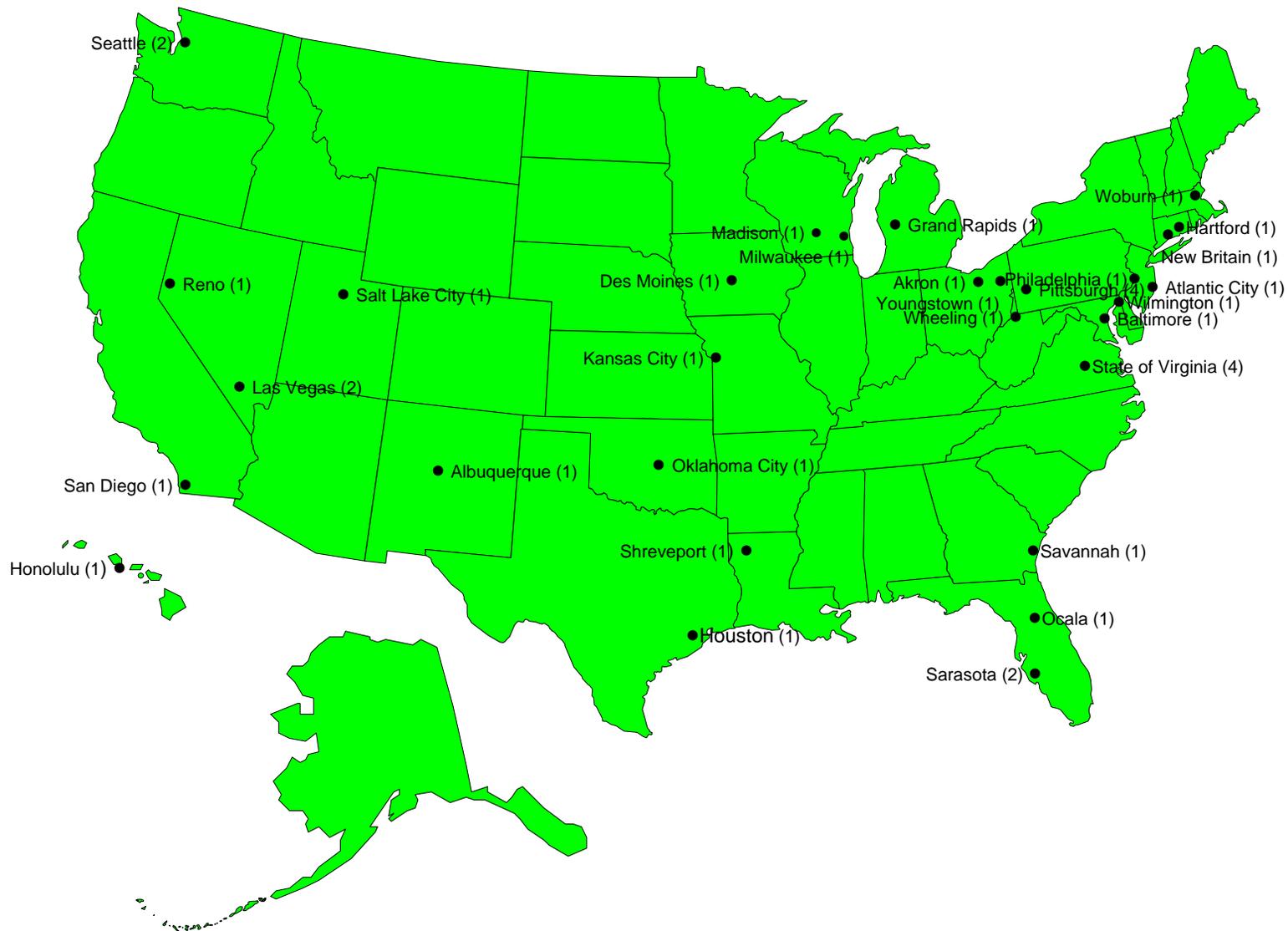
Some of the more noteworthy observations for individual sites include:

- Overall decreases in calls for service, reported crime, and arrests in the target area with no evidence of displacement (San Diego, CA)
- Statistically significant increase in citizens' positive perception of their neighborhood, in police responsiveness, community involvement, and positive perceptions of other city services (Hartford, CT)
- Declines in total Index Offenses, violent crime and property crime in the target area greater than those experienced in the city as a whole (Ocala, FL)
- A decline in target area drug offenses from 1997 through 2001 of over half, and drastic target area declines in Part I crimes (75.5%) and Part II crimes (69.5%) from 1997 through 2000 (Honolulu, HI)
- A reduction in absenteeism of 50% among a targeted group of chronic truants (Grand Rapids, MI)
- Positive affects among children in the experimental group for school attendance, conduct, conflict resolution strategies and use of aggression in response to peer conflicts, as compared to a control group (Madison, WI)

These are just a selection of the positive results highlighted in these local evaluation efforts. Though not all programs show positive effects attributable to Weed and Seed activities, the value of including such local efforts into the tapestry of Weed and Seed assessments is high. EOWS will continue to work with local sites in encouraging detailed and thorough analyses of individual Weed and Seed efforts.

# Jurisdictions for Which A Local Evaluation Was Included in This Meta Analysis

() indicates the number of local sites involved



## Summaries of Individual Evaluations

### ***San Diego, CA***

**Title:** Weeding and Seeding Troubled Communities: A Process and Impact Assessment of the San Diego Weed and Seed Site

**Target Areas:** San Diego Target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 7/1/1997

**Focus:**

This report presents the study findings from the process and impact assessment of the Weed and Seed project operated within the City of San Diego. Though the resources available for the research effort were limited, the San Diego experience, as revealed in this report, provides valuable information for future efforts to positively impact distressed and crime-ridden communities, both locally and across the nation.

**Findings:**

The specific impact of the Weed and Seed Initiative on the target community was difficult to document through the available data. It was difficult to associate changes occurring during the Weed and Seed project with actual program activities and outcomes. However, the program did focus on a community in need based on sociodemographic data and crime measures. Findings supporting the positive influence of the Initiative include the following.

- Overall, crime declined based on calls for service, reported crime, and arrest data, and there was no evidence of crime displacement into the surrounding community.
- The response of the justice system to criminal activity in the area became more aggressive after the implementation of the Weed and Seed project.
- Target area residents and merchants reported positive ratings of the police through interviews and surveys.
- Many Weed and Seed strategies were consistent with the needs of the community (e.g., more officers on the street, improvement of police-community relations).

The following study results suggest areas for improvement as Weed and Seed efforts, or similar programs, continue to address troubled communities.

- Several areas within the target site continue to be crime ridden.
- The majority of probation revocations for probationers residing within the target area were the result of individuals failing to report to their probation officer and disappearing

(i.e., absconding) rather than court action (e.g., modification of probation order, new sentence), suggesting a need for more aggressive follow-up with individuals under community supervision to prevent absconding.

- Based on interviews with residents and surveys of local merchants, less than half of the community viewed the area as desirable. Slightly less than a quarter (23%) of residents and 40 percent of merchants rated their community as a good place to live or conduct business. Over half noted that this rating remained unchanged compared to one year earlier.

- The specific problems in the target area requiring attention varied across groups (i.e., residents, merchants, and law enforcement officers). For residents and police, drug-related crime was the most frequently cited problem, while merchants noted graffiti most often. However, all three groups agreed that gang activity was a problem for the community.

- Reporting of victimization, according to resident interviews, was below actual occurrence levels. Further, opportunity for participation in problem solving with police was curtailed by time constraints and child care issues.

- Education measures (i.e., scholastic test scores, truancy, and school drop-outs) remained relatively unchanged.

- Based on the number of new businesses and jobs emerging in the Weed and Seed area over time, the business climate did not seem to be impacted by the Initiative.

- There was a lack of consensus among program participants (i.e., Executive Steering Committee and Neighborhood Council) regarding the methods for achieving program goals and decision-making authority.

## ***Hartford, CT***

**Title:** National Evaluation of Weed and Seed - Hartford Case Study

**Target Areas:** Stowe Village target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 7/1/1999

### **Focus:**

This case study documents the activities implemented under the Weed and Seed Program in Hartford and assesses the program's impact at this site. The activities undertaken for this case study: (1) on-site observation of program activities; (2) in-person interviews with program staff; (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.

### **Findings:**

Survey analysis shows statistically significant improvements in citizens' perceptions of their neighborhood, in police responsiveness, in community involvement, and in perceptions of other city services. In this respect, the findings of the survey analysis and the crime statistics analysis--both point to an overall improvement in the quality of life in Stowe Village Weed and Seed Site. Participant interviews also confirm positive effects of Weed and Seed strategy in the target area.

## ***New Britain, CT***

**Title:** Final Report of the Evaluation of the New Britain Weed and Seed Program

**Target Areas:** New Britain

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 6/22/1999

### **Focus:**

The primary purposes of this study were to determine if the New Britain Weed and Seed site was consistent with the vision of the Executive Office for Weed and Seed and to identify the effects of site programming. This evaluation covered the first two years of program implementation and focused on four areas; steering committee, weeding, and seeding activities as well as budget allocation. Data collection measures included steering committee observations and interviews, interviews with program implementation staff, and a review of the program budget. Police data (calls for service, drug calls for service, number of personal crimes, and property felonies) was analyzed and a comparison was made between this data for the site area and the rest of New Britain for the years 1993-1998 that enabled crime trends to be examined before and after program inception.

### **Findings:**

Results first provided a description of the weeding and seeding program activities. Notable weeding activities consisted of the gun abatement program which targeted drug dealers and illegal weapons through increased police presence in gun crime "hot spots" and the Community Action Team that stepped up police patrols to reduce open air drug markets and minor violations. The MARCH (Multi-Agency Response to Community Hot Spots) program was provided assistance by the weed and seed program to provide government inspections of local businesses. Seeding strategies consisted of a coalition between police, public, and private agencies to strengthen the site with numerous social, economic, and housing improvement programs. The weed and seed program also established funding for neighborhood revitalization as well as adult and youth programming. The analysis of police data noted two major findings after program inception; there were significant differences in regards to calls for service and drug calls for service between the weed and seed site and the rest of the city. There was found to be an increase in calls for service within the weed and seed site for the first year of the program with a decrease in the second year. The report concluded that the increase was due to the success of community policing, as site residents felt more comfortable in calling the police to report crimes, and the increased police presence of the weeding strategies. The decrease the next year was attributed to the actual reduction in crime

caused by the weeding initiatives. This same concept was hypothesized for the increase in drug calls for service in the first year of program implementation. Multiple program recommendations concluded the evaluation.

There were a couple study limitations noted by the authors. First, due to a lack of resources, there was no resident survey which would have given a perspective on the quality of resident life. Next, the timing of the evaluation limited the ability to make pre-post comparisons of program effects as the evaluation was conducted two years after the program beginning. A number of staff that were around during program inception were not available for comment which resulted in current key players having to think back retrospectively. This threatened the accuracy of information about site programming.

## ***Wilmington, DE***

**Title:** Evaluation of Operation Weed and Seed in Wilmington, DE

**Target Areas:** Westside/Hilltop, West Center City, and Browntown/Hedgeville target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 9/1/1999

**Focus:**

This report was one in a series of annual evaluations of the Wilmington Weed and Seed Site conducted since 1993. These studies provide a longitudinal analyses of both crime trends in the targeted area as well as changing perceptions and attitudes about Operation Weed and Seed and community policing in Wilmington.

**Findings:**

During 1997, little change in drug activity was shown over the preceding year. However, in 1998 there were positive signs of improvement in some offense categories (i.e. robbery and assault) and shootings which had been a major problem for the area in recent years had shown a significant decrease.

Resolution of the City's budgetary problems meant that the police department would be fully staffed shortly and other organizational changes for managing the seeding activities indicated that there was a more promising situation for addressing the Site's persistent crime and deteriorated neighborhood conditions than in the preceding five years.

## ***Wilmington, DE***

**Title:** City of Wilmington Operation Weed and Seed 1992 to 1996: An Evaluation

**Target Areas:** Westside/Hilltop, West Center City, and Browntown/Hedgeville target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 3/1/1998

**Focus:**

While mainly analyzing crime issues, this report summarizes the activities and impacts of Operation Weed and Seed in Wilmington from 1992 to 1996.

**Findings:**

Despite some substantial gains in reducing drug crime activity and stabilizing the overall community conditions in the target area during the first two years of operation, the Site experienced a severe setback in 1994 when budgetary problems caused the local government to cutback law enforcement personnel not only to it but city-wide as well. Combined with a reduction in the amount of Federal resources and a resurgence of drug traffickers from outside the community and the state, crime quickly reverted to its pre-Weed and Seed levels.

The restoration of some community policing resources and assistance from county, state, and Federal law enforcement agencies contributed to a gradual return by 1996 to close to the early Weed and Seed crime control achievements. However, it was difficult to re-establish trust with residents and rebuild the community infrastructure that was lost in the interim. This highlights the importance of maintaining a sustained commitment for a Weed and Seed effort beyond a few years. Otherwise, credibility with the residents is lost and vital momentum may not be recoverable when renewed efforts are made.

The Site's seeding efforts were not as strong as its weeding activities. When the community policing resources were cut, many of the positive conditions that would have promoted neighborhood revitalization were lost as well.

## ***Ocala, FL***

**Title:** City of Ocala Weed & Seed Evaluation Final Report August 1999

**Target Areas:**

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 8/1/1999

**Focus:**

The purpose of the evaluation is to determine; 1) the extent to which the Weed and Seed program in Ocala has been effective in meeting the goals for the program and the objectives for each component, and 2) the degree to which the identified strategies have been implemented and the relationship of these strategies to the program's outcomes.

**Findings:**

Utilizing stakeholder interviews, door-to-door surveys, and publicly available data. Data shows a decline in the target are for Total Index Offenses, violent crime, property crime from 1994 to 1997, and the percentage decline for the Weed and Seed target area is greater than similar declines in the City of Ocala as a whole, Marion County, and the state of Florida. Drug arrests, on the other hand, more than doubled at a time when drug arrests in the city, county and state were declining.

## ***Sarasota, FL***

**Title:** National Evaluation of Weed and Seed - Manatee/Sarasota Case Study

**Target Areas:** North and South Manatee target areas

**Number of Sites:** 2

**Publication Date:** 7/1/1999

### **Focus:**

This case study documents the activities implemented under the Weed and Seed Program in Manatee/Sarasota and assesses the program's impact at this site. The activities undertaken for this case study: (1) on-site observation of program activities; (2) in-person interviews with program staff; (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.

### **Findings:**

The authors caution that any perceived changes in crime trends and citizen opinions on public safety may not be solely due to implementation of the Weed and Seed strategy. Nevertheless, improved trends in crime data in the two target areas relative to the rest of the county were observed. The resident survey results were mixed with some improvements in residents' sense of safety and satisfaction with police shown but other indicators did not change or observed differences could be the result of measurement issues.

## **Savannah, GA**

**Title:** Savannah's Weed and Seed Program Evaluation

**Target Areas:** Northeast Savannah target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 8/1/2000

### **Focus:**

The evaluation examines the effectiveness of select "weed" side components of Savannah's Weed and Seed program in 1999, by analyzing data gathered from the target area residents and interviewing police line officers as well as supervisory and management personnel with responsibilities in Weed and Seed neighborhoods. Other methods include Weed and Seed committee meeting minutes and quarterly reports; and, from crime data bases aggregated by both target area and city-wide crime incident data.

### **Findings:**

By any measure, the analysis of crime data in the target area for the four-year period shows that Weed and Seed neighborhoods are still severely over-represented by violence, drugs, public nuisances, and simple assaults. In sum, the frequency of crime over the life of the Weed and Seed project has changed little.

What to make of these findings? From its inception, annual federal funding for the Savannah Weed and Seed Project declined 72 percent (from \$790,000 to \$225,000). As a result, police staffing levels in the target area dropped. Indeed, a difficulty in surveying police for this study was in finding personnel still assigned to the target area. As funding decreased, interest in the project waned. Management reassigned officers to other areas and other duties demanding their urgent attention.

Despite the funding decline, target area residents' favorable perceptions of the quality of police services persisted and, on some items, actually increased from 1997 to 1999. This was the case in spite of the prevailing opinion that inter-agency cooperation and collaboration could have been better, particularly between SPD and CNT officers. Paradoxically, as funding decreased, officer opinions about the adequacy of resources to implement the program did not change. Officers of one agency believed, on the whole, that staffing, equipment, and materiel were adequate to the task. Another agency's officers consistently maintained that the resources were sparse and the management of those resources deficient.

In view of the drop in funding and staffing declines, it is also interesting to note that the incidence of violent crime, drug trafficking, public nuisances, and simple assaults in the target area remained fairly steady from 1996 through 1999. In short, there was neither a reduction of crime inside the target area nor displacement of crime to areas outside the Weed and Seed neighborhoods. At the same time, residents' perceptions of neighborhood safety in the target area remained unchanged--as did their view that the only way to get things done about crime and drugs in the neighborhood was for the residents to help themselves.

## ***Honolulu, HI***

**Title:** Weed and Seed Evaluation: Honolulu, Hawaii, Site I, Kalihi-Palama-Chinatown

**Target Areas:** Kalihi-Palama-Chinatown

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 12/1/2002

### **Focus:**

This study of the Kalihi-Palama-Chinatown site in Honolulu incorporated a multi-faceted evaluation design that consisted of several data collection measures. Such measures included observations plus resident, business, and Weed and Seed Executive Committee surveys and interviews conducted with local vendors, law enforcement, the courts, residents, weed and seed staff, business owners, and other partners. An analysis of crime data and weed and seed meeting minutes, records, and documents was undertaken as well.

### **Findings:**

Project findings were broken down into the four main components of weed and seed programming: (1) law enforcement, (2) community policing, (3) intervention, prevention, and treatment, and (4) neighborhood restoration and economic development. The law enforcement component was seen by many as a dramatic success due to a consistent commitment by agencies along with highly visible actions. Drug offenses within the site were reduced by half from 1997 to 2001 and part I and part II crimes within the site area were reduced by 75.5% and 69.5% between 1997 and 2000. The Weed and Seed court, the federal prosecution of drug dealers, and geographic restriction imposed for site offenders were a few highlights of law enforcement programming. Results also indicated that site residents feel safer since weed and seed implementation amid concerns about the displacement of crime. Community policing initiatives were noted with the increased support of citizen patrols that were deemed to have a positive impact but also a need to sustain participation over the long term. The resident survey revealed that more than half of the residents felt that police responsiveness to community concerns was above satisfactory. A substantial amount of residents also saw a visible level of interaction between police and the community at neighborhood events. Overall, "Seeding" programs (components 3 and 4) were seen to make progress but with a recent decrease in participation. Successful program implementation of "Seeding" activities was seen as much more difficult compared to strategies of "Weeding". Intervention, prevention, and treatment programming teamed with community policing efforts to establish safe havens where multiple services were provided; academic tutoring, computer classes, anti-drug education, community projects, health screening, mentoring, and recreational

programming. These safe havens were seen to have a big impact on the site along with the Needle Van initiative that helped curb the spread of HIV/AIDS, though, meeting the needs of the homeless was found to be challenging. According to the results, neighborhood restoration and economic development programming face a daunting task in meeting their goals in the midst of several economic factors. However, the site participated in multiple partner initiatives that included community cleanups, playground renovation and construction, enterprise zone designation, loans for business development, multiple funding sources aimed at community development, and business training and education programs. Findings revealed a great amount of resources but a lack of a clear vision for an economic turnaround. Results concluded with several recommendations for the site pertaining to inter-organizational, administrative, and operational strategies.

This was a very thorough study of the site using multiple tools of data collection. One problem was found in the residential survey where the response rate was 15.2%.

## ***Des Moines, IA***

**Title:** Des Moines Weed and Seed Evaluation Statistical Analysis Center Partnership Project

**Target Areas:** Des Moines target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 6/30/1999

### **Focus:**

The Des Moines Weed and Seed evaluation examined the history and evolution of the Des Moines Weed and Seed site and analyzed current resources and needs in the community, with particular attention to the Safe Haven component of the strategy. This report summarizes the information gathered and includes recommendations for ongoing planning and implementation by the Des Moines Weed and Seed site to strengthen the project.

### **Findings:**

In general, the Des Moines Weed and Seed site has followed its strategic plan fairly closely over the first few years of implementation. While some specific tasks discussed in the original plan submitted in 1995 have not been carried out and others added as funding, needs and priorities changed, the overall direction of the effort has remained the same.

An analysis of data available from the DMPD reveals that crime decreased significantly in the target area from 1994 to 1997. This decrease is likely the result of a combination of factors, with the Weed and Seed efforts among them.

The Safe Haven element of the plan has added value to the target area, according to several people interviewed for this evaluation. The Weed and Seed initiative has leveraged its limited resources in several ways. Weed and Seed funds are often used to supplement other funding streams, and are infrequently the sole source of funding for a program. By building on existing programs and partnering with other organizations, the Weed and Seed funds have been stretched to provide a wide variety of services and opportunities, such as arts programming, job training, and educational services, that would otherwise be very limited, if present at all, in the target area.

While there appears to be a general perception that conditions have improved in the Des Moines Weed and Seed target area and that the combination of various initiatives have had positive results, most also agree that more needs to be done. As discussed above,

additional structured activities or programs for middle-school age youth, and opportunities that provide leadership experience and decision-making responsibilities for youth are needed. Ongoing and even greater coordination among the multiple service providers is also essential.

It is also important that the strategies being supported be of sufficient intensity and duration to have an impact. While there is a tendency to respond to the most pressing, immediate needs in the community, that may lead to inconsistency and ineffectiveness in the long-term. Continuing to build the capacity of the Safe Haven, and sustaining quality programming over time should produce better results.

## ***Shreveport, LA***

**Title:** National Evaluation of Weed and Seed - Shreveport Case Study

**Target Areas:** Highland/Stoner Hill target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 7/1/1999

### **Focus:**

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 activities undertaken for this case study: (1) on-site observation of program activities; (2) in-person interviews with program staff; (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.

### **Findings:**

Despite some project startup problems that mostly delayed the "seeding" activities and affected the Site's general management, the Site was able to establish itself. However, both the U.S. Attorney and local District Attorney's Offices declined to place any emphasis or additional resources on prosecuting cases resulting from the Site's "Weeding" activities.

These initial difficulties did not prevent the Site from producing some positive results. The analysis of crime data showed an improved trend in the target area, even when crime started increasing in the rest of the city. The modest investment of resources by Weed and Seed was also found to play an important role in mobilizing and facilitating the existing community organizations and public agencies in addressing the target area's problems. The resident survey reported improved perceptions of police control over street drug activities, satisfaction with neighborhood programs, and participation in anti-crime and community revitalization activities. Perceptions of safety and overall neighborhood satisfaction indicate that even with these improvements, there is still much to be done in the target area before it can be called a healthy, restored community.

## ***Baltimore, MD***

**Title:** Evaluation of West Baltimore Weed and Seed

**Target Areas:** West Baltimore target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 8/1/2000

### **Focus:**

This report summarizes the activities of the West Baltimore Weed and Seed steering committee. It addresses the problems that the steering committee encountered throughout their development and reviews the positive moves the group made towards achieving the established weed and seed goals. Additionally, residents' perceptions of the neighborhood are summarized.

### **Findings:**

Due to various organizational and startup problems with the Site, the researchers were unable to perform much of the originally planned evaluation tasks. The following are their major observations:

- The position of project director should be filled as close to the beginning of the project as possible. Additionally, this position should be funded as a full-time position.
- Training should be made available for all steering committee members so that group dynamics, delegation of authority, and efficient means of decision-making can be understood completely.
- Programming needs should be prioritized, and the opening of the Safe Haven should receive high priority.
- Efforts should be made to publicize the Weed and Seed efforts and programs.

## ***Woburn, MA***

**Title:** Analysis of Police Activity and Programming in the Woburn, MA Weed and Seed Area

**Target Areas:** Woburn target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 9/1/1999

### **Focus:**

The goal of the evaluation was to provide a product that the Woburn Weed and Seed site could use to further their work and also provide research that will be helpful for the Weed and Seed program as a whole by discussing the dynamics of arrest and calls for service mapping. In conducting this evaluation, the Massachusetts SAC analyzed and mapped data detailing police calls for service.

### **Findings:**

As the city of Woburn approaches its fourth year of Weed and Seed funding, a preliminary review of the program operation has found the involved agencies have implemented the program as initially designed. Weed and Seed continues to operate as an umbrella program, under which multiple initiatives target a population containing various needs and issues. Although this study had identified the volume of seeding activities currently operating in the City, a closer examination of these initiatives would be beneficial in determining the impact they have had on the city's residents.

The Statistical Analysis Center anticipates the identification of hot spots will be useful to the Woburn Weed and Seed administrators in highlighting areas that might need additional resources, and may also provide indications of possible crime displacement. In planning for this study, it was initially hypothesized that calls for service would increase as the community becomes more involved with the idea of helping the police to solve problems and their confidence and belief in their efforts increases. As demonstrated in this report, an interesting trend was experienced in Weed and Seed Area: calls decreased slightly (1%) in 1996 over 1995, then increased 4% in 1997, and again decreased (2%) in 1998 to reach the same call volume experienced in 1995. What is more interesting to examine are the changes that have occurred over time within the different Weed and Seed areas. The emergence of robbery incidents where they were previously never executed, and the significant decrease in disturbance calls are a few examples of where police can gain insight into their community's crime problems. Overall, crime in Woburn has decreased consistently over the four-year period. Whether this trend can be attributed to the weeding of criminals off the city streets or the seeding of programs for residents in need of services, is a topic that warrants further study.

## ***Grand Rapids, MI***

**Title:** Evaluation of the Westside Operation Weed and Seed Truancy Initiative

**Target Areas:** Westside Grand Rapids target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 12/1/2000

### **Focus:**

This report presents the findings of an assessment of the truancy initiative. Researchers attended numerous meetings of the Weed and Seed truancy committee in an effort to identify issues raised by program developers and key stakeholders. Interviews were conducted with program administrators and primary service providers. Data on each student involved in the program were obtained from Grand Rapids Public Schools. In addition, school data were matched with data received from agencies providing services to the families of identified truants. This data were analyzed in an effort to assess intervention effectiveness.

### **Findings:**

The results of this evaluation illustrate significant progress in reducing elementary truancy. Following the first two interventions (receiving a letter and being visited by the attendance officer), absenteeism decreased for students in the program. The program was most successful for chronic truants, or youth who missed twenty percent or more of total school days prior to the initial letter. When the chronic truancy group was isolated from those who missed less than twenty percent, absenteeism was reduced by 50%.

Program implementation closely corresponded with the model that was initially developed, however deviations were observed at several stages, including truancy identification, the referrals process, interagency communication, and information sharing.

There are several implications of the findings of this evaluation. First, it appears that significant improvement can be made with chronic truants using this model. Concentrating efforts on this population would enhance the program's success and streamline the process for school officials with limited resources. At the same time, students with less serious attendance problems might be better served by a different type of program. Second, the importance of a program coordinator to oversee the initiative cannot be overstated. A coordinator could work with all stakeholders and assure that the model is being implemented as it was designed. Third, active participation by the Grand Rapids Public Schools Research and Evaluation Unit is critical for resolving data collection and information sharing concerns.

The program developed and implemented here demonstrates the necessity of coordinating several community agencies toward a common goal. Multifaceted issues, such as truancy, cannot be effectively managed by any singular agency. Through a collaborative approach, the primary goal of reducing truancy in the target area was achieved, especially for chronic truants. At the same time, several other important projects resulted from this partnership. A network was developed between many community resources that may foster continued coordination in the future. The program also illustrates the challenges of a collaborative effort, which can inform future efforts in other school districts. Overall, this program has shown that a coordinated community response can prove successful if carefully developed and strictly implemented.

## ***Kansas City, MO***

**Title:** Weed and Seed Evaluation: Westside Expansion Site

**Target Areas:** Westside Expansion target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 3/1/1997

### **Focus:**

This study examined the overall impact of the Westside expansion Site. Crime statistics were provided by the Kansas City Police Department. The Boys and Girls Club provided information about their programs. Residents' opinions were obtained during telephone interviews conducted with a random sample of 200 community residents. The sample size had a confidence level of 95% confidence, with a precision of +/- 7%. The purpose of the survey was to obtain opinions from residents in the Westside area about changes within their neighborhoods during the year the Weed and Seed Program was in effect. These opinions were used to help assess how well the program achieved its goals.

### **Findings:**

The Weed and Seed Program was successful based on both quantitative crime data, youth participation in Boys and Girls Clubs activities and resident perceptions about changes in their neighborhood during the year July 1995 through June 1996.

Unlike property crime, which was immediately effected by the Weed and Seed Program, violent crime took longer to effect. One of the reasons for the lagged reduction in violent crime as compared to the reduction in property crime could be that reductions in violent crime require more than just increased policing. The increased number of police patrols in the area probably represented an immediate deterrent to property crimes. Over time, the increased level of policing combined with community participation may have changed attitudes and the culture in the neighborhood enough that violent crime levels began to decline a year after the program was implemented.

Of the hundreds of children who participated in the SMART program at the West Bluff and Oak Park Clubs, 558 completed a survey at the end of their participation. The survey assessed the impact the program had on the child's attitudes toward drug and alcohol abuse. The detailed results are shown in a later section of this report. For each of the 24 items, a large majority of the children responded that their attitudes had improved. For example,

66% Reported that their attitude toward tobacco had improved.

80% Reported that their attitude toward the use of alcohol had improved.

74% Reported that their attitude toward the use of illegal drugs had improved.

63% Either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that their attitude toward their community had improved.

79% Either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that their attitude toward adults had improved.

The resident survey found perceptions that community conditions had improved for concerns such as public disorder, "dope houses", "gang activities", and the physical appearance of the neighborhood.

## ***Las Vegas, NV***

**Title:** National Evaluation of Weed and Seed - Las Vegas Case Study

**Target Areas:** West Las Vegas and Meadows Village target areas

**Number of Sites:** 2

**Publication Date:** 7/1/1999

### **Focus:**

This case study documents the activities implemented under the Weed and Seed Program in Las Vegas and assesses the program's impact at this site. The activities undertaken for this case study: (1) on-site observation of program activities; (2) in-person interviews with program staff; (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.

### **Findings:**

Both police data and survey for the West Las Vegas target area indicate some reduction in Part I crimes (relative to the rest of the city) and improved perception of public safety and police responsiveness. The Meadows Village target area did not show a similar reduction in crime. The study authors suggest that the latter area's characteristics make it more difficult to effect significant change. In both target areas, program participants have reported improvements in their quality of life, in terms of newfound personal efficacy and increased social capital. These outcomes can be seen most clearly in improved life skills, language proficiency, and job readiness.

Organizational and fiscal management problems experienced by the Site led to recommendations for greater Federal oversight and technical support.

## ***Reno, NV***

**Title:** Evaluation Report of the Northeast Reno Weed and Seed Strategy (1999-2001)

**Target Areas:** Northeast Reno

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 4/1/2002

### **Focus:**

This study was a process evaluation that focused on the site's decision-making processes and nature of organizational relationships as well as perceptions of the various programs offered through weed and seed. Research methodology consisted of email, telephone, or mail surveys of steering committee members, "persons of contact" of partner organizations, program participants, and site residents along with an interview of the site coordinator and observations of steering committee meetings.

### **Findings:**

The survey of the steering committee revealed that the committee had oversight and representation responsibilities along with high expectations for programming and an understanding of the general purpose of the weed and seed strategy. A major challenge of the committee was to sustain the interest and commitment of members. Recently, the committee has become more active in weed and seed programming and has started to more clearly define its role. Respondents noted that the biggest success of the weed and seed campaign were the programs implemented in the community. The biggest challenges facing the overall strategy was reported as the inability to get program recognition in the community. The committee also noted that there was conflict between them and their fiscal agent (Community Services Agency) due to differing goals, interests, and assets. Committee recommendations for change included increasing the community awareness of the strategy, increasing community program participation, and insuring that community programs have a lasting and positive effect. The site coordinator interview revealed that major challenges to her position and the weed and seed strategy include getting the steering committee to make decisions and increasing resident participation in programs. Notable success, according to the site coordinator, included multiple community programs and the site's relationship with the police department. The site coordinator also revealed that the biggest challenge in administering program strategy lies in the conflict between the steering committee and the fiscal agent as they differ on who is the decision making body of the strategy. In regards to change, the site coordinator hopes to have a new fiscal agent and increased community participation in programs. Observations and interactions with the site coordinator show that she is the driving force behind the program. It is also concluded that the strain caused from the

conflicts between the steering committee and the fiscal agent hinder the program's success in its initiatives. Participants of community based programs related to prevention, intervention, and treatment as well as neighborhood restoration provided positive feedback about these programs. Workshops on entrepreneurial skills, computer skills, leadership skills, and career skills along with community service programming were described as increasing self-esteem and self-confidence as well as educational with participants eager to attend more programming. Two major recommendations of the study request that the weed and seed strategy increase public awareness about programming and resolve the conflict between the steering committee and the Community Services Agency (fiscal agent).

Major problems with the study consisted of a low turnout of respondents for the multiple surveys that were conducted. Only 32% of the steering committee responded to their survey. A number of contacts from partner agencies were unable to be contacted, most notably the Community Service Agency workers who are an instrumental part in the strategy. A phone and mail survey of program participants yielded a 29% response rate. Also, there was only a slight mentioning of the resident survey results in the report which could have provided more insight about the success of program implementation.

## ***Atlantic City, NJ***

**Title:** Weed and Seed Program Evaluation

**Target Areas:** Atlantic City target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 9/1/2000

**Focus:**

Atlantic City Weed and Seed completed a formal evaluation of the achievement of project goals and objectives from January 1999 to September 2000. Outcome measures included juvenile and adult crime statistics and Safe Haven-related data.

**Findings:**

Of 17 measures, objectives were met in 12 and not met in 5. Evaluation outcomes provided programmatic direction in terms of strengths and weaknesses of existing strategies and the need to modify strategies to increase effectiveness. Positive outcomes were found for reductions in juvenile and general calls for service, decreases in reported crimes for several major offenses (I.e., assault, robbery, drugs, domestic violence, and weapons), and improved attendance and grades for Safe Haven participants. Over \$225,000 in leveraged resources per year was also noted.

## ***Albuquerque, NM***

**Title:** Evaluation of Albuquerque Weed and Seed Sites: Trumbull and La Mesa Neighborhoods

**Target Areas:** Trumbull and La Mesa target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 7/1/2000

### **Focus:**

The primary goals of the evaluation were to examine and document the role of the Community and Prosecutions Coordinator (CPC) and determine the degree to which Weed and Seed drug related offenses were successfully prosecuted. The overall evaluation question was this: how does the work of the CPC impact the Neighborhood Associations (NAs) of Trumbull and La Mesa? This question is specified further by asking whether or not court monitoring, performed by members of the NAs in coordination with the CPC, increases the likelihood that Weed and Seed drug trafficking cases will be successfully prosecuted?

The core objectives for the evaluation design were to: (1) thoroughly examine the coordination efforts between the CPC and the Trumbull and La Mesa NAs and; (2) determine whether court monitoring by neighborhood members is associated with favorable prosecution outcomes for convicted criminals, especially drug-related offenses.

### **Findings:**

It is clear by the data collected that neighborhood participation in the court monitoring process has a positive effect on keeping criminals out of these neighborhoods. There are a greater number of stay away orders, less dismissals, and more prison sentences for offenders arrested in the Weed and Seed sites, compared to other neighborhoods in Albuquerque. In addition, neighborhood participation in the court monitoring process is ostensibly facilitated by the CPC. Through the coordination efforts of the NA members and the CPC, drug trafficking cases are efficiently tracked as they are processed through the system. Because of this, NA members are more effective in organizing their efforts in keeping drug traffickers out of their neighborhoods. Clearer, more formal collaborative partnerships will promote further change and are the next step in providing these and other Albuquerque neighborhoods with better, more comprehensive community services.

## **Akron, OH**

**Title:** National Evaluation of Weed and Seed - Akron Case Study

**Target Areas:** West Side target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 7/1/1999

### **Focus:**

This case study documents the activities implemented under the Weed and Seed Program in Akron and assesses the program's impact at this site. The activities undertaken for this case study: (1) on-site observation of program activities; (2) in-person interviews with program staff; (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.

### **Findings:**

The study was conducted too early in the implementation period of the Weed and Seed efforts in Akron (substantial EOWS funding was only awarded starting in FY1997) to draw any definitive conclusions regarding program impacts. However, the report does detail crime trends as well as community perceptions in Akron.

The authors noted that during the intervening period between 1992 when Akron began its efforts to start a Weed and Seed Site and the awarding of major EOWS funding in 1997, the local officials and agencies had undertaken several initiatives which indicated that their interest in the Weed and Seed approach went beyond merely obtaining a grant from EOWS. Consequently, resources such as grants from other Federal programs, a community policing structure, and the establishment of a multi-service Safe Haven facility were much further developed than for many other newly funded Sites in other jurisdictions.

## ***Youngstown, OH***

**Title:** Weed and Seed Strategy - Year Three Evaluation Report

**Target Areas:** Youngstown

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 4/1/2003

### **Focus:**

This study wanted to determine if the Youngstown Weed and Seed strategy has reached its major goals for the third year (2002) of the program and if improvements have been made since program inception. The major goals related to the 4 components of weed and seed programming; law enforcement, community policing, prevention, intervention, and treatment and neighborhood restoration. Crime rates, housing records, and information from youth programs was collected and compared to baseline data from the previous two years of the program. Mail surveys of community residents and businesses were conducted and their results were compared to survey results from the previous two years.

### **Findings:**

Multiple findings were revealed in regards to the four components of weed and seed programming. Law enforcement results showed that there was an 18% decrease in the number of drug complaints in the target area from year two to year three. There has also been a 30.7% decrease in drug arrests made by the vice squad and patrol division of the Youngstown PD since program implementation. Weed and seed housing code violations have been reduced by 56% since 2000. Since program implementation, there has been an 18.2% drop in homicides and a 8.7% drop in the amount of crime within the site. The community survey revealed that 34.3% of respondents stated that the law enforcement component was average while 28.8% rated it as good. According to the business survey, nearly six in ten business owners have seen an increase in the visible presence of police. In regards to community policing, ten block watches were found to be still active in the community and there have been several training sessions on crime prevention and intervention being held for block watch members in year three. Safety beacons have also been distributed to site residents in 2002. The community survey revealed that 41.6% of its respondents said that they never heard of the weed and seed strategy while 62.2% said that they did not feel safe in their neighborhood at night. The survey did report that 53.3% stated that the police are more visible in their community. The weed and seed component of prevention, intervention, and treatment was seen in continued programming such as the Boy and Girl Scout Troops, Kids Grieve Too (grief counseling for kids), and an after school program administered by the Youngstown Urban Minority Alcohol and Drug Abuse Outreach Program (YUMADAOP). Area youth have also been

provided a continued assortment of educational and recreational activities through after school programs and summer camps. Progress in meeting the goals of neighborhood restoration was seen in the business survey that reported that 70.2% of respondents said that they have heard of the weed and seed strategy and that a majority of them were interested in a site beautification project. According to the community survey, however, over four in 10 respondents stated that the neighborhood restoration component was poor. There have also been 315 units demolished within the weed and seed area since program inception along with block watch neighborhood cleanups that were active in 2002.

## ***Oklahoma City, OK***

**Title:** The Impact of Project Exile on Firearm Offenders in the Oklahoma City Weed and Seed Area

**Target Areas:** Oklahoma City target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 1/1/2002

### **Focus:**

This report provides a preliminary overview and assessment of Project Exile for Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. This is a joint project of the Oklahoma City Police Department (OCPD), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), the Oklahoma County District Attorney's Office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Oklahoma. Project Exile began in February 2000 in response to firearm violence, but additionally because of current state sentencing practices, which do not require all firearm offenders to serve 85 percent of their sentence. The objective is to reduce firearm violence in the Oklahoma City area through coordinated and targeted use of federal, state and local law enforcement resources.

The purpose of this report is to establish several baselines regarding the firearm offenders and offenses for 1999 and to then compare them to those for 2000. Additionally, this information is then to be compared to the Oklahoma City Weed and Seed location, as well as a control area. More specifically, the goals and information included throughout the report involve the following:

- illustrating where the firearm offenses are occurring;
- providing/establishing a baseline on the number of offenses and where they are occurring so they can be tracked (movement and displacement could be measured) and identify trends which can be measured over time;
- providing detailed comprehensive information about the nature of these firearm offenses;
- producing in-depth descriptive information about the firearm offenders;
- documenting the changing nature of the firearm offenders; and
- identify changes in firearm offenses and offenders between 1999 and 2000 in the whole city-area, the Weed and Seed area, and the control area.

### **Findings:**

The findings from this report include, although not exclusively, the following:

- there were a total of 1,351 firearm offenses in the OCPD database from November 1, 1998 through October 31, 1999 (referred to as 1999 hence forward);
- the number of firearm offenses decreased to 1,266 for the November 1, 1999 through October 31, 2000 time period (referred to as 2000 hence forward), which represents over a 6% decrease;
- the Weed and Seed area had 89 firearm offenses in 1999 and 84 in 2000, which translates into over a 5% decline;
- a control area, which was identified, experienced 99 firearm offenses in 1999 and 110 in 2000, which is over an 11 % increase
- the most common firearm offenses were robbery, assault and battery, misdemeanor firearm offenses, and feloniously pointing a firearm; and
- approximately 80% of the firearm offenses committed within the Weed and Seed area were perpetrated by offenders living outside the Weed and Seed area.

Overall, the findings tend to suggest that Project Exile is having a positive and anticipated impact on firearm offenses, at least within the Weed and Seed area. Firearm offenses have decreased slightly in the Weed and Seed location where the heightened threat of federal prosecution exists. In contrast, there has been an 11% increase in firearm offenses in the control area. Although a pre-Project Exile baseline and a one-year post-Project Exile analysis have now been established, additional research and tracking are needed to provide a clearer picture of the impact of Project Exile.

## ***Philadelphia, PA***

**Title:** Final Evaluation Report for the Philadelphia Weed and Seed Project

**Target Areas:** Philadelphia target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 12/10/1997

### **Focus:**

The Center for Social Policy and Community Development, Temple University, has conducted an overall, outcome evaluation of Philadelphia's Weed and Seed Project, covering the five years of the program's existence. The evaluation has had two primary goals.

1. To assess the extent to which the City of Philadelphia Weed and Seed Project has accomplished its stated tasks and performed its stated activities.
2. To document and analyze the success, or lack thereof, of the Weed and Seed strategy, as it has been applied in the City of Philadelphia.

The evaluation included an emphasis on the impact that the project has had at the neighborhood level and an emphasis on the lessons that can be learned from the Philadelphia experience. A central aspect of the Weed and Seed strategy is the collaboration between law enforcement agencies, between government agencies, and between government agencies, community groups and the private sector. The shape and outcomes of these collaborations was, therefore, highlighted in the evaluation.

The relative effectiveness of the various program elements and the way in which they complement each other was assessed

### **Findings:**

Overall, the project has achieved successes far in excess of what should be expected, given the level of funding available. Participants have accomplished their stated tasks in a responsible and praiseworthy fashion. The community survey conducted for this evaluation identified three needs as primary: eliminate the drug problem, provide youth programming and/or recreational facilities and remove or renovate abandoned buildings. The project has focused precisely upon these stated needs and has achieved considerable success in each area. Over the five years of the project period there has been a decline in the participation of a number of organizations, paralleling a decline in funds, and also a turn away from a full-blown community policing strategy. Nevertheless, the experiences that have been amassed indicate that the Weed and Seed strategy is well worth pursuing.

It is concluded that the Philadelphia Weed and Seed project remains a very viable experiment. If project participants agree to revisit the initial territorial approach --with its close links between law enforcement and community groups -- and renew their efforts to coordinate all relevant agencies, the project should be considered for further and greatly increased funding.

The participants of this project are committed and highly capable. The strategy continues to hold promise for the resolution of a major social problem. Continued financial support for this important effort is recommended.

## ***Pittsburgh, PA***

**Title:** National Evaluation of Weed and Seed - Pittsburgh Case Study

**Target Areas:** Hill District and Hazelwood/Glen Hazel/Homestead/West Homestead target areas

**Number of Sites:** 2

**Publication Date:** 7/1/1999

### **Focus:**

This case study documents the activities implemented under the Weed and Seed Program in Pittsburgh and assesses the program's impact at this site. The activities undertaken for this case study: (1) on-site observation of program activities; (2) in-person interviews with program staff; (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.

### **Findings:**

The authors caution that any perceived changes in crime trends and citizen opinions on public safety may not be solely due to implementation of the Weed and Seed strategy. Nevertheless, improved trends in crime data for the Crawford-Roberts section of the Hill District were greater than those for the rest of the city indicating that the Weed and Seed target area had experienced a proportionately higher reduction in crime. The resident survey findings do provide substantial evidence that residents of the Crawford Roberts area considered their community a safer place to live than in 1995 and also regarded the police and other city services as more responsive to the community's needs and concerns that they did in 1995.

Other portions of the study examined the organizational aspects of the Weed and Seed efforts in the two target areas. It was noted that the Sites' operational and managerial strategies seemed to be appropriate and successful for the political, social, and economic environments in Pittsburgh.

## ***Pittsburgh, PA***

**Title:** A Closer Look at Pittsburgh Weed and Seed

**Target Areas:** Hill District and Hazelwood/Glen Hazel/Homestead/West Homestead target areas

**Number of Sites:** 4

**Publication Date:** 8/1/2001

**Focus:**

To document activities and outcomes of the Weed and Seed strategy using readily available data from various local sources.

**Findings:**

High levels of population mobility and the loss of working age persons for both the city as a whole and the Local Site presents severe challenges for revitalization of these target areas. Despite many obstacles, the Local Sites have shown significant progress in controlling crime. This was evidenced by crime trends that continued to decline between 1997 and 1999 even when crime in the rest of Pittsburgh was going up.

Several examples of active commercial revitalization and community level involvement were cited as evidence of continued progress in restoring these target areas' infrastructures.

## ***Houston, TX***

**Title:** A Closer Look at Houston's Gulfton Weed and Seed Project

**Target Areas:** Gulfton target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 10/1/2000

**Focus:**

To document activities and outcomes of the Weed and Seed strategy using readily available data from various local sources.

**Findings:**

The Gulfton community contains many challenges for crime control and neighborhood revitalization. Its population is highly transient, with many young adult males and families with teenagers, and a large proportion of immigrants. A striking feature are the very large apartment complexes that dominate the physical landscape of the community. These buildings by themselves are substantial communities.

Consequently, much of the Weed and Seed strategy has been to stabilize conditions in the short term so that long term efforts have a chance to develop. Extensive partnerships have been developed that include intergovernmental and public/private cooperation. Despite some difficult obstacles to overcome, the Site seems to be making progress in its efforts to establish an effective infrastructure for community revitalization.

## ***Salt Lake City, UT***

**Title:** National Evaluation of Weed and Seed - Salt Lake City Case Study

**Target Areas:** Glendale/Poplar Grove/Fairpark target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 7/1/1999

**Focus:**

This case study documents the activities implemented under the Weed and Seed Program in Salt Lake City and assesses the program's impact at this site. The activities undertaken for this case study: (1) on-site observation of program activities; (2) in-person interviews with program staff; (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.

**Findings:**

Weed and Seed is cited as being instrumental in moving the City government from a response driven approach to service provision to delivering a linked set of safety services with more focused interventions into community problems. The analysis of crime data indicated that Part I crimes were declining more quickly in the target area than in the rest of the city. The resident survey found improvements in public opinions of police performance in maintaining order in the neighborhood, reducing street drug activity, and interacting positively with the community.

## ***State of Virginia***

**Title:** Evaluation of Virginia's Weed and Seed Initiative

**Target Areas:** Lynchburg, Norfolk, Petersburg, and Winchester

**Number of Sites:** 4

**Publication Date:** 10/1/2000

### **Focus:**

This evaluation report documents the implementation of Virginia's Weed and Seed Initiative in four Local Sites. The evaluation also attempted to assess the impact of the programs on local crime rates.

### **Findings:**

Although it has not been feasible to thoroughly assess the impact of Weed and Seed, preliminary evidence suggests that the program shows potential as a way to focus coordinated community efforts against crime. Local Weed and Seed coordinators indicated that they are encouraged by the program, and every Weed and Seed Site has plans to continue the program, at least in part. However, each locality has experienced challenges with struggling components throughout the project, specifically those that require high community involvement and strong leadership.

Because the state's financial support of the program has terminated, the evaluators have developed specific recommendations to guide the future development of Weed and Seed programs. These recommendations address the following issues:

- Improving resident "buy-in" and support of Weed and Seed activities
- Enhancing the role of the prosecutor in the Weed component
- Improving needs assessment techniques when planning Seed activities
- Facilitating strong leadership and interagency cooperation
- Increasing private sector involvement, and
- Creating program coordinator positions for each local program

## **Seattle, WA**

**Title:** National Evaluation of Weed and Seed - Seattle Case Study

**Target Areas:** Central District target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 7/1/1999

### **Focus:**

This case study documents the activities implemented under the Weed and Seed Program in Seattle and assesses the program's impact at this site. The activities undertaken for this case study: (1) on-site observation of program activities; (2) in-person interviews with program staff; (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.

### **Findings:**

Weed and Seed was cited as instrumental in moving the Seattle Police Department (the EOWS grant recipient) into greater interaction and coordination with other agencies and community groups. This approach is credited as making a substantial contribution to the significant reductions in crime evident in the target area. Especially worth noting is that the Mayor and the Police Department responded to initial community concerns about the potential negative aspects of the planned "weeding" activities. This opposition was successfully addressed by insuring community input into the "weeding" operations and the adoption of law enforcement strategies acceptable to the area's residents.

The resident survey indicated improved opinions about public safety, city services, and quality of life which was coupled with increased citizen involvement in the community and a greater awareness of the Weed and Seed program. Respondents did report a slightly higher sense of victimization than was claimed in another survey done two years earlier.

The overall success of Weed and Seed in Seattle is also indicated by the City's continued expansion of the existing Site plus the development of a second Site. Some aspects of Weed and Seed have been incorporated in to the City's operations and budget as a means of sustaining its strategic approach to crime reduction and community revitalization.

## **Seattle, WA**

**Title:** A Closer Look at Seattle's Weed and Seed Strategy

**Target Areas:** Central District and Southeast Seattle target areas

**Number of Sites:** 2

**Publication Date:** 6/1/2002

### **Focus:**

To document activities and outcomes of the Weed and Seed strategy using readily available data from various local sources.

### **Findings:**

The pattern for reported crimes of violence, drugs and weapon possession were studied for 1995-2000. These are target crimes for Weed and Seed and important quality of life issues for distressed neighborhoods. Counts for these serious crimes are down in the Weed and Seed sites. However, these crimes are also lower in the city as a whole.

A further examination of the same types of crime data answers the question whether the general reduction in reported crime is expected or real by measuring the relative percentage of crime in Seattle's Weed and Seed sites. This indicated that the Central Weed and Seed site accounted disproportionately for about 17 percent of Seattle's serious crime in 1994, but that in 2000 the area only accounted for about 12 percent of Seattle's serious crime. Crime not only went down in the Central District; it went down faster than the remainder of the city. This was not expected and is probably not explicable without the intervention of Weed and Seed law enforcement and community programs.

The Southeast Weed and Seed site, in the South Precinct showed an initial proportional improvement between 1997 and 1998 by dropping from about 12 to 10 percent of Seattle's crime. Since then it has made no more progress than the remainder of the city. But like the rise and then decline of proportional levels of crime in 1998 in the Central District, things can improve after a setback. Weed and Seed is not a stagnate strategy. When things start to slip, Weed and Seed police, planners, and community activists recognize changes in crimes, adjust, and readdress the situation. The small increase in crime in 2000 in the Southeast Weed and Seed site, which the SPD reports is in part due to displacement of crime from the Central District, is being met through the initiation of new law enforcement and community organization initiatives.

A number of positive outcomes were reported for various seed activities and leveraging of outside resources to support the Site's efforts.

## ***Wheeling, WV***

**Title:** Program Evaluation of the O.N.E. Wheeling Weed and Seed

**Target Areas:** East Wheeling

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 11/1/2003

### **Focus:**

This study conducted a process and impact evaluation of the East Wheeling weed and seed site for the period of November, 1998 to November, 2002. Study methodology consisted of gathering data from newspapers and related weed and seed activity reports, conducting interviews with steering committee members and law enforcement as well as community policing officers, data analysis of police crime reports, a focus group interview with safe haven representatives, and a community impact survey.

### **Findings:**

Results revealed multiple findings from the four targets areas of weed and seed programming. Law enforcement was found to be the most important component of the program with the most focus and money used. There was a 28% reduction in crime in East Wheeling compared to only a decrease of 4% for the entire city of Wheeling. Steering committee interviews revealed an overall consensus that the weeding aspect of the program had been successful. The community impact survey showed that East Wheeling residents were pleased with police efforts. In regards to community policing, it was found that there has been an increase in confidence by site residents towards the police and trust between them as well. A seeding impact was seen as moderate to low. However, through multiple seeding programs, children were seen as a priority by East Wheeling Weed and Seed. Neighborhood revitalization was seen as not meeting goals as almost half of site residents believed that neighborhood conditions are worse or at least still problematic. Recommendations were given that supported a more cohesive steering committee, only one recognized safe haven, caution when choosing the site fiscal manager, and a separate entity to support neighborhood revitalization.

There are a few notable problems with this study. First, in one part of the results, crime data and community impact survey results in East Wheeling were compared to Wheeling Island even though these two communities are dissimilar in regards to race and median income. Thus, a comparison here must be taken with caution. Next, the reduction in crime noted in East Wheeling must be taken with caution as well as there was an increase

in crime in the neighboring community of Wheeling Island. There was also a low turnout of steering committee interview respondents as only 11 out of the possible 29 were interviewed.

## ***Madison, WI***

**Title:** Safe Haven Program Evaluation (1996-97)

**Target Areas:** Madison target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 10/27/1997

### **Focus:**

During the 1996-97 year, the focal year of this report, the evaluation had several components:

1. A determination of a demographic profile of children who attended the Safe Haven programs. Children who attended the programs were contrasted with (a) all other children in their schools and (b) other children who resided in the target neighborhoods but did not participate in the programs. The purpose of these comparisons was to ascertain if the Safe Haven programs were successful in identifying and serving children who were at risk for academic and social problems.
2. A limited examination of children's Safe Haven experiences. This included ratings of the quality of the programs, a determination of how often the children actually attended the programs, and how the children perceived the programs.
3. Tests of program effects on children's development. Five aspects of child adjustment were investigated: academic grades, conduct grades, school absences, misconduct, and conflict resolution strategies. We sought to determine if program attendance was associated with these adjustment indices. We examined this issue across one-year and two-year time periods.

### **Findings:**

There were positive effects of participation in the Safe Haven programs on children's school attendance, conduct, and conflict resolution strategies. One-year comparisons between adjustment in May 1996 and in May 1997 revealed that children who participated in the programs during the 1996-97 school year improved their attendance at school and engaged in less misconduct compared to children who did not attend the programs. Improvements in conflict resolution strategies also were found for Safe Haven participants. Children who were enrolled in the programs increased their endorsement of an avoidance strategy for dealing with peer conflicts.

Positive effects of participation in the Safe Haven programs for a two-year period were evident as well. Comparisons of adjustment in May 1995 and in May 1997 showed that children who were enrolled in the programs during both the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years reduced their selection of overt aggression in response to hypothetical peer conflicts and improved their attendance at school. Program children also evaluated an avoidance strategy for dealing with peer conflicts more positively than non-program children did following their participation in the programs.

## ***Milwaukee, WI***

**Title:** Milwaukee Weed and Seed Program Evaluation

**Target Areas:** Avenues West/Metcalf Park/Mid-Town target area

**Number of Sites:** 1

**Publication Date:** 9/1/1997

### **Focus:**

This study examined the impacts of the Milwaukee Weed and Seed Site in 1995-96.

### **Findings:**

- Serious crime has decreased. The Milwaukee Weed and Seed Program has been a major contributing factor in the overall reduction of crime in the targeted areas - especially violent crime and drug and weapons offenses. Inasmuch as the decline was greater in the Weed and Seed target areas than the comparison areas, this would indicate that the Weed and Seed Program has been successful in its crime reduction strategy. The greatest reduction in the level of criminal activity occurred in the Avenues West target area, whereas the least improvement took place in Metcalfe Park.

- Residents feel safer. In all three Weed and Seed target areas, residents perceive that their neighborhoods are safer since the start of the Weed and Seed Program in 1995. In the two and a half years since Weed and Seed began in Milwaukee, the level of fear expressed by target area residents has fallen significantly as has the percentage of residents reporting criminal victimization to the survey team.

- Residents' attitudes toward police performance are more positive. A growing number of people living in the target areas are finding favor with how Milwaukee police perform their job. The opinions and attitudes of residents about police performance have grown more positive in the last several years, especially regarding quality of life/community policing activities. The commitment demonstrated by the Milwaukee Police Department in using Weed and Seed funds to target drug houses and open air drug markets as well as an array of nuisance ordinance violations has received strong support in all three areas.

- Weed and seed arrests remove a significant percentage of serious offenders. One in four Weed and Seed arrests in 1995 and 1996 resulted in individuals being removed from the community and placed via the courts in state prisons or state run, secure and/or juvenile institutions. An additional twenty percent were removed and committed to the Milwaukee County House of Correction.

- Weed and Seed enhanced agency cooperation; the Milwaukee Police Department and the State Department of Corrections have utilized the opportunity provided by the Weed and Seed Program to work closely together, share information on probationers and parolees, and enhance the overall safety of the target areas. The Milwaukee Police and Federal law enforcement agencies have implemented successful initiatives targeting drug dealers.

- A key feature and innovative aspect of the seeding portion of Milwaukee's Weed and Seed Program has been the work of project staff known as Community Liaisons. The work of three Community liaisons is having a positive impact on the three targeted areas that they serve. Their door-to-door communication efforts and their efforts to build neighborhood strategies have gained community approval and support for this approach to strengthening neighborhood resistance to crime. Milwaukee's innovative Weed and Seed Community Liaisons provide a key communication link to and from residents.

The Milwaukee Weed and Seed Program has demonstrated the value of its strategy of "weeding out" violent crime and gang activity and improving the quality of life in the targeted areas. Challenges remain, however, and crime is still a problem in the target neighborhoods. The groundwork for continuing the Weed and Seed Program has been completed, and plans for a sustained source of funding need to be pursued. Finally, given the diverse nature of the Weed and Seed target areas, the Milwaukee Weed and Seed approach is replicable and provides a model for developing an anti-crime strategy in other areas of Milwaukee.

## ***Milwaukee, WI***

**Title:** A Closer Look at Milwaukee Weed and Seed

**Target Areas:** Avenues West/Metcalf Park/Mid-Town target area

**Number of Sites:** 3

**Publication Date:** 3/22/2000

### **Focus:**

To document activities and outcomes of the Weed and Seed strategy using readily available data from various local sources.

### **Findings:**

Serious Crime has Decreased - One year after the initiation of Weed and Seed in three Milwaukee neighborhoods, violent and weapon crimes decreased by almost 50 percent. In 1995, almost 900 arrests involved a violent and/or a weapon violation. One year later it was reduced to about 450. Each of the three neighborhoods realized a substantial decrease in violent crime.

Compared to Surrounding Neighborhoods -- Crime Was Lower Than Expected - The evaluation shows that arrests for violent, weapon, drugs and violation of probation in surrounding comparison group neighborhoods increase slightly, while at the same time the number of arrests for the same crimes decreased in the Weed and Seed neighborhoods by about 21 percent. While there is still a lot of crime in the Weed and Seed neighborhoods, the greatest success has been a reduction in the most serious and dangerous crimes.

Residents Feel Safer - Based on randomly selected respondents, neighborhood residents were favorably affected by the impact of the Milwaukee Weed and Seed programs. Before Weed and Seed between 50 and 65 percent of the residents feared that they would be a victim of a serious crime. In 1996, although still high, this "fear rate" had decreased to about 45 percent for neighborhood residents.

Attitudes of the Police Starts to Become More Positive - The surveys also indicated that residents were significantly more aware of increased police presence. The: pre - post surveys also show a 10 to 20 percentage point increase - now over half - of the residents feel that "the police department has done a good job in making me feel safe in this area." Likewise, survey results show a very favorable response to the work of the community liaisons. Most residents were impressed with the helpfulness and knowledge of the "new" community workers. Still residents want more police protection.

The Youth Crime and Violence Task Force has continued Milwaukee's interest of measuring the degree of success for the Safe and Sound project. They want to know "How much better are we doing?" They are aware of the magnitude of their current undertaking as compared to the three neighborhood Weed and Seed program. Therefore they are investing in an ongoing evaluation with Marquette University that measures both performance for each program area and specific outcomes. The "bottom-line" measurement is the anticipated decrease in crime rates in each neighborhood. Social order, improved educational and life decisions (e.g. drug use, teenage pregnancy, and self sustaining employment) are not expected to occur in an environment of disorder marked by violence, gangs, and illicit drug marketing.