

# **Weed and Seed Performance Measures: Analyzing and Improving Data Resources**

## **Final Report**

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## Executive Summary

This project had three major objectives that would help to expand the available information for assessing the performance of individual local sites as well as provide indicators for the overall National Weed and Seed Initiative.

1. A systematic analysis was conducted of the problems and solutions identified by local sites as the focus of their Weed and Seed Strategies. The purpose of this effort was to be able to categorize the sites according to particular community issues. This would allow future evaluation and performance measurement efforts to concentrate on sites that are clearly involved with specific concerns and would reasonably be expected to have results related to that topic.
2. Additional research work was done with 100 local sites to explore data resources cited in their strategy documents as potential information sources for future evaluation studies and performance measures. A listing of possible measures and considerations was developed from this effort.
3. An updated analysis using expanded information from CCDO's administrative records on key implementation dates and the GPRC homicide data set was done that provides additional documentation of the National Weed and Seed Initiative's impact on crime as indicated by homicide statistics.

### Objective 1

Although the site strategies are reviewed individually through the Weed and Seed Official Recognition application process, an aggregate analysis of the site strategies had not been done to identify the commonalities and differences across the sites regarding the specific community problems being addressed and the range of solutions being pursued. This study was able to determine the range of issues and the relative complexity of the overall strategies developed by the sites.

To accomplish this task, the strategy documents were retrieved from CCDO's administrative records for the 309 local sites that received Official Recognition (OR) status from FY2000 to FY2005. A rigorous review process was used to develop a classification scheme for the community problems and solutions cited in the strategies. Following this step, each site strategy was then categorized using this approach.

The report presents the community problem/strategy solutions classification schemes, the frequency of specific problem/solution references by the sites, and an analysis of the distribution of sites by the categories.

The conclusion of this effort is that while, as a whole, the sites share many commonalities in the problems being addressed and the solutions adopted, individually there can be substantial

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differences in the focus of a site's strategy. The design of any future evaluation studies and performance measures should take this diversity across the sites into account.

### Objective 2

The follow-up contacts with the local sites found that many have information resources that could contribute to research on Weed and Seed's effects on communities. However, there is great variability in both content and reporting capabilities across jurisdictions that has to be considered when designing any national information collection effort. For answering specific questions about Weed and Seed efforts, these resources could provide additional data that would respond to various inquiries.

### Objective 3

Previously studies have examined the homicide statistics submitted in the local sites' annual Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) reports as a common indicator of Weed and Seed's impact on crime. A limitation of these analyses has been incomplete information on key strategy implementation dates for many sites. One of this project's tasks was a search of CCDO's administrative records to locate these missing dates. Additional date information was located for 321 sites.

Because the analysis of crime levels before and after a site's strategy implementation requires a complete set of implementation dates and multi-year homicide statistics, the number of sites available for study can be affected by several factors. Due to the initial step of obtaining OR status before a local site can receive federal funding, there are actually three possible dates that could be used for analyzing pre/post strategy implementation. Not all dates were available for all sites due to various recordkeeping issues and the age of some sites. Changes in site boundaries and other developments prevent some sites from having valid data for a time series analysis. Some sites have not provided complete, multi-year data sets, or inconsistencies were found in some records that could not be readily resolved. Because some sites have not existed for a sufficient time to have data for all of the years needed for the analysis, their records are currently incomplete.

As was previously mentioned, three possible dates could be used as the start of a site's strategy implementation—the OR award date, first grant award date, and the date that sites report for the beginning of activities. The elapsed times between each of the three dates were calculated to see if there was a significant difference for studying the implementation of strategies. The vast majority of sites were found to have times between OR and the start of activities that were insignificant for studying pre/post implementation effects. Of the five sites with at least a year between OR and their activity starting date, only one site had any substantial difference in pre/post results.

This project was able to perform a pre/post strategy implementation analysis for 100 sites. This was nearly double the number of sites available for a previous 2004 study. These sites had an average decline of 1.4 homicides following implementation of their strategies compared to a

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decrease of only 0.5 homicides for the remainder of their jurisdictions. A further analysis was done using a Relative Change Scale that characterizes the sites' performance as a function of the changing conditions in their respective host jurisdictions. This analysis also found that the sites have a very positive effect on crime in their target areas when viewed from the perspective of the trends occurring in the surrounding jurisdictions.

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### Introduction

This report expands the information available for the study of the National Weed and Seed Initiative. Specifically, it identifies and categorizes the diverse community problems and solutions cited across the local Weed and Seed sites' strategies, explores possible performance measures and data sources for future site assessments, and reanalyzes the local sites' Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) homicide data using different key dates in the process of site strategy implementation to determine possible effects on crime trends. The intent of this research effort was to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the common features and differences among Weed and Seed participants and to explore the potential for additional data sources for measuring the sites' performance and impact.

Unlike other federal programs which are generally structured around a particular client group, need, or service such as providing subsidized meals to poor school children or the rehabilitation of substandard housing, Weed and Seed is a comprehensive, strategic approach using locally developed plans to solve persistent crime problems and other contributing conditions in targeted community or neighborhood areas. The belief is that improved coordination and collaboration across agencies and the community spanning a broad range of responsibilities and resources will result in a synergistic effect that would be more effective than the existing networks of isolated decision-making and service delivery.

Consequently, the over 300 local Weed and Seed sites have activities and impacts related to a wide range of crime and other community concerns such as social, educational, and health needs; poverty and economic development problems; and housing and environmental quality issues. Performing accurate data collection and analysis tasks across this extensive universe of different efforts and outcomes would consume a tremendous amount of evaluation resources. Conversely, not all local sites are severely affected by every possible crime or community problem or are directly involved in their solutions, which will minimize their relevance for the study of specific concerns. A goal of this project was to provide a basis for focusing a national evaluation study on the issues of greatest interest to the Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO) and the subsets of local sites most appropriate for inclusion in various research efforts.

Recognizing the diversity of the community problems that Weed and Seed sites are attempting to address through their strategies as well as the variety of solutions being employed, this project reviewed the strategy statements submitted to CCDO from 2000 through 2005. The purpose was to classify the problems and activities that the sites present in the applications for Official Recognition (OR), the status conferred by CCDO upon Weed and Seed sites that allows a site to apply for federal funding. These findings are intended to assist a future national evaluation effort by providing information on which issues and local sites are most likely to have meaningful impacts and potential performance measures a study of the National Weed and Seed Initiative's effects on specific concerns such as drugs, gangs, or distressed living conditions.

In addition to the classification analysis activities discussed above, sites were contacted to determine data sources that may be commonly available to Weed and Seed sites. Representatives from 100 active or formerly active sites were interviewed to obtain a broad-

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based understanding of potential sources and considerations for consistent and reasonable data collection. By collecting information on common problems and strategies, as well as building a database of available data sources, JRSA will provide valuable information for any subsequent evaluation efforts. As a result of this research, JRSA has developed a series of recommendations for performance measures related to common strategies for Weed and Seed sites.

Additional elements of this project include an effort to supplement the previous analyses of Weed and Seed efforts that rely exclusively on OR dates or the first date of federal grant awards as single arbitrary starting points for Weed and Seed efforts. An intensive search of administrative records was done to complete a database of local sites' OR dates as well as first Weed and Seed grant award dates. A comparison of homicide trends using different key dates would resolve questions regarding the 1) the amount of time between when sites receive OR status and their first federal funding and 2) the relative effects of receiving OR status versus receiving Federal grant funds in terms of crime reduction.

## Overview of the National Weed and Seed Initiative

The National Weed and Seed Initiative currently consists of 331 local sites, which are located in 46 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and overseen by CCDO, the Weed and Seed effort is a cooperative strategy involving United States Attorneys' Offices, community and social service organizations, neighborhood residents and businesses, and local law enforcement and other government agencies. The goal of Weed and Seed is to prevent, control, and reduce crime in targeted high crime areas through interagency and community coordination and collaboration.

Based on research that indicated effective crime control efforts must reach beyond the scope of traditional criminal justice agencies and resources to address the underlying factors that make some communities susceptible to persistent and high levels of crime, Weed and Seed takes a comprehensive and strategic approach to systemic change in selected neighborhoods. As a geographically based program, Weed and Seed brings a different perspective to the delivery of services and allocation of resources by providing a community-wide focus and insuring ongoing communications across efforts that might otherwise operate in an isolated and uncoordinated manner.

Site characteristics are widely variable; for example, site boundaries may range from a few neighborhood blocks to an entire county. Weed and Seed sites focus their goals and objectives on site-specific problems while simultaneously securing human services and economic resources in and around the target area. Although their problems and solutions are locally chosen and prioritized, sites may utilize a wide variety of federal, state, and local resources in their Weeding and Seeding programs.

One of the key tenets of the Weed and Seed strategy is the recognition that even in the most crime-plagued neighborhoods, it is likely that a variety of anti-crime efforts are already being done. In addition to regular policing services being provided, there may be some form of community policing activity in the area. There are probably a number of prevention efforts sponsored by various government, community-based and faith-based organizations, as well as grass roots activities by residents and other interested stakeholders (e.g., local business owners). It is through organizing and coordinating these ongoing efforts, and securing resources to fill gaps in existing activities, that Weed and Seed is designed to affect crime and community livability. In order to enter the federal Weed and Seed program, local sites must show the capacity and resolve needed to bring about long-term change affecting individuals, groups, and institutions.

A Weed and Seed area's U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO), community leaders, local law enforcement, and other key stakeholders form a steering committee that sets the site's general direction and acts as a focal point for planning and coordination of the local site's goals and activities. Once the structure and leadership has been established for the proposed site, the steering committee must develop a strategy based on local resources and needs. The structure of the Weed and Seed strategy is based on four major components: law enforcement, community policing, prevention/intervention/treatment, and neighborhood restoration. There are also four

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fundamental principles that guide the development and implementation of a Weed and Seed strategy: collaboration, coordination, community participation, and leveraging of resources.

Individual sites strive to weed out crime, seed the community against future crime and crime-related risk factors, and sustain gains made through the initial Weed and Seed efforts. Local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors, with support from federal law enforcement resources, including the USAOs, take the lead in weeding efforts while governmental and community-based public and private organizations pursue seeding strategies with various human and neighborhood resources to restore the community's infrastructure. The community-policing component provides a bridge between the weeding and seeding aspects of a site strategy. The long-term goal is to go beyond any immediate reductions in crime by making the community resistant to future threats that may result in the return of high levels of criminal activity.

A significant challenge for the local sites' leadership is insuring that their strategies remain appropriate, as community conditions may change over time and new concerns emerge. These may be otherwise positive developments such as improved housing and increasing property values that may result in resident displacement or, negative influences such as the arrival of new gangs or the sudden proliferation of new street drugs.

A national priority for CCDO is building the capacity of the local sites to sustain Weed and Seed efforts beyond the expiration of the initial federal funding. By espousing long-term sustainability for all Weed and Seed sites, the strategy addresses the problems and concerns of local residents and promotes the financial stability and community resources necessary for continued growth and development of the designated area. Sustainability depends on a site's continued evaluation of neighborhood problems and unmet needs and its ability to maintain the steering committee as a principal mechanism in securing existing and new resources and funding sources.

Successful weeding strategies require a joint effort of law enforcement agencies and prosecutors, as well as the cooperation and leadership of neighborhood residents. Community engagement is a key component of community policing and is considered an essential element in fostering long-term community change. Community policing is combined with intensive law enforcement, including problem-oriented policing strategies, to present a comprehensive crime control approach in the Weed and Seed sites. These two mechanisms compel law enforcement personnel to improve their interaction and relationship with the community while allowing residents to participate in crime prevention and law enforcement activities within their own neighborhood.

Weed and Seed prevention, intervention, and treatment goals focus on access to needed human services in the designated area. Through their strategies and activities, sites identify, advocate for, and, in some instances, provide essential services to at-risk and criminal populations in order to reduce and control criminogenic influences and improve the overall quality of life. This often requires collaboration from multilevel social service providers. As part of the neighborhood restoration strategy, improved human services contribute to the development of the economy,

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employment opportunities, the physical environment, and the community's general infrastructure.

To join the federal Weed and Seed effort, an interested community must apply for Official Recognition (OR) by submitting a strategic plan to CCDO for review and approval in order to be eligible for Weed and Seed funding. A potential Weed and Seed site must first notify the U.S. Attorney's Office in its district of its intent to apply for OR. The U.S. Attorney's Office may also assist the potential site with its administrative and strategic development, according to CCDO guidelines. Once a site receives OR status, it is then eligible to apply for federal funding on a yearly basis during a 5-year funding window. During this process of preparing their OR applications, potential sites will first organize their community, begin the collaboration process, and state the needs and strategies upon which this report is based.

A site's Weed and Seed OR status lasts for a five-year period. In special circumstances, the OR status can be extended up to a maximum of ten years. During this time, a site is eligible for grants from CCDO that require an annual application. The cumulative total received during the entire OR period cannot exceed \$1 million.

Following the expiration of its OR status, a site may continue its participation in the National Weed and Seed Initiative by applying for Graduated Site status. While it is no longer eligible for direct CCDO funding, this allows a local site to be eligible for other Weed and Seed activities such as conferences and technical assistance and for any special considerations available to Weed and Seed sites when applying for funding assistance from other programs.

## Previous Weed and Seed Evaluation Efforts

Since its inception in the early 1990s, the National Weed and Seed Strategy has considered evaluation research an important part of its efforts. National and locally initiated studies, yearly data collection, and academic efforts are some of the varied methods by which the program has been examined. Despite these efforts, there are inherent barriers to conducting a uniform and consistent national evaluation across the local sites. These include differences in criminal code definitions, procedures, and reporting capabilities across jurisdictions; wide ranges in site size, local organizational structures and responsibilities, and agency participation; site strategies that include a broad universe of community problems and solutions; modest grant award amounts that must pay for program operations before local evaluations can be pursued; overlapping funding sources for activities affecting the sites; limited authority by the sites' management over partner agencies; and other logistical impediments.

The need to improve current evaluation components and build upon previous work is fully recognized by CCDO. For example, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) stated its concern that Weed and Seed "generally collected activity data rather than measuring outcomes" and warned against CCDO relying on homicide as an outcome measure (GAO, 2004). Since 1999, homicide statistics have been a primary crime control performance measure used by CCDO for budgetary reporting on the effectiveness of Weed and Seed. The GAO report was published before the final release of CCDO's first Crime Pattern Data Analysis, which provided a multi-crime, multi-year, view of offending patterns in participating Weed and Seed sites.

Another criticism is that the federal Weed and Seed program has not undergone a thorough evaluation encompassing all local sites. Given the number of sites across the nation and funding available to CCDO for awards and administration of the program, any type of comprehensive all-site evaluation would prove to be prohibitively expensive, or it would be so cursory as to be effectively useless.

The very nature of the National Weed and Seed Initiative poses a number of challenges in terms of conducting a methodologically rigorous evaluation. Even in the collection and analysis of simple crime data, there are substantial problems due to the variation in legal definitions and procedures for jurisdictions across the nation. Other difficulties are the inconsistencies in or lack of ready availability of data at the neighborhood level that prevent the collection of uniform and reliable national measures for many concerns. CCDO encourages sites to conduct local evaluations and provides resources and technical assistance to those doing so. Many locally initiated studies have been conducted that examined individual sites as well as there have been several studies of multiple sites within a state. There also have been national efforts that have attempted to measure effectiveness through the study of multiple sites.

The largest of the national efforts is a cross-site analysis funded by The National Institute of Justice (NIJ, 1999). This study examined both the implementation and outcomes of the Weed and Seed Initiative across sites. Case studies were performed for each of 12 target areas in eight jurisdictions to determine how well the strategy lived up to expectations, what elements were strongest, what elements failed, and lessons to be learned over the life of the project.

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In order to answer these questions, funding applications and other documents were reviewed; program administrators, senior law enforcement staff, service providers, managers of seeding activities, and community leaders were interviewed; crime incident and arrest data were provided by police departments and analyzed; group interviews were conducted with seeding participants; and residents were surveyed at two different time periods. Although findings varied across sites, significantly positive results were found for Weed and Seed's impact on several outcome measures.

In six of the study sites Part I crimes decreased more than in the host jurisdiction during the same period. There also appeared to be an association between a decrease in Part I crimes and drug crime. These same six sites also experienced an initial increase in drug arrests (probably due to concentrated law enforcement), and then a decline. Findings also examined the relationship between crime trends and the concentration of resources in sites. Factors that appeared to be related to success in implementation included the community setting (i.e., strength of social and institutional infrastructure, economic development possibility, and transience of population) and program design (i.e., mix of weeding and seeding activities and the sequence of implementation).

Another national effort was the Crime Pattern Data Analysis conducted by the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA, 2003). For this study, sites were asked to submit data for three crimes that were considered the greatest problem in their site. Data were requested for a six-year period, beginning two years prior to, the first year of, and three years following Weed and Seed project implementation. Crime data for the entire jurisdiction of which the target area was a part were also reported for the same time period. A pre/post analysis of the change in crime over time was conducted for each site as well as a comparison of the target area and host jurisdiction over time.

A total of 98 sites submitted data, with 20 providing complete six-year data sets, 19 with five-year data sets, and the remainder submitting some data but for less than five years. Sites most frequently reported drugs and violent crime, and approximately 62% named violent crime in their top three most problematic crimes. In a analysis of the sites that submitted usable data sets, a pattern of an initial increase in reported crime during the year of implementation and the first year following was identified, followed by decreased levels of reported crime in later years of the effort. These decreased levels of crime were well below the starting values experienced at the onset of Weed and Seed activities.

Based on research into crime control strategies, including intensive law enforcement and/or community policing components, it is to be expected that any program employing these strategies should initially experience increases in crime rates as a consequence of higher levels of police activity and citizen reporting of incidents. The data then show an apparent decrease in the study sites in years three and four - a decrease not mirrored by the remainder of the jurisdiction. Similar trends were found for both sites that submitted partial multi-year data sets as well as the sites that provided a complete six-year data set.

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This analysis of yearly patterns of offending was repeated for data broken down by specific crime types. Five categories were used—homicide, illicit drugs, violence and weapons, property crimes, and other (prostitution, public order crimes, etc.). A pattern of initial increase in reported crimes, followed later in the Weed and Seed cycle by dramatically lowered reported crime is seen throughout. Crimes that are likely to be dealt with in a more urgent manner (e.g., violent crimes) show decreases earlier than other crimes. This is especially true in the case of drug-related crimes, where reported offenses are heavily influenced by police activity. Therefore, because intensive law enforcement is an integral and ongoing component of the Weed and Seed strategy, it is understandable that drug crimes take much longer before showing a decrease through police counts of incidents. Overall findings indicate that Weed and Seed sites present a general pattern of relatively positive change or stability in crime levels as compared to their host jurisdictions.

Another major source for Weed and Seed performance data is the annual Grantee Site Characteristics and Activity Data Report, which is part of CCDO's responsibilities under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). Each site is required to submit a report for every year it operates as an Officially Recognized Weed and Seed site or for any year in which the site spends federal monies. The report includes questions about law enforcement operations, community policing activities, site-specific as well as surrounding-jurisdiction crime data, community/social services provided by the sites, neighborhood restoration projects, and funding other than CCDO money leveraged for use in the site.

The homicide data collected through the GPRA has been used to analyze trends in the sites in comparison with their host jurisdictions. This analysis, conducted by JRSA (2003), focused on 220 sites in 174 jurisdictions. Over half of the study sites experienced a decrease in homicides during the study period, 14% stayed the same, 8% increased but at a lower rate than the jurisdiction, and 23% rose at a faster rate than the jurisdiction. The authors classified 77% of the Weed and Seed sites as having successful outcomes, i.e., they either had a decline in homicides or displayed greater stability or control in homicide trends than those found in the host jurisdiction, exclusive of the Weed and Seed site area. The latter finding was considered reasonable due to the belief that the Weed and Seed target areas were specifically chosen because of their persistent crime problems. Consequently, any negative crime trends affecting the jurisdiction at large should be reflected in the Weed and Seed sites in an equal or more intense level.

The greatest source of information on Weed and Seed effectiveness however, has been locally initiated studies of single sites. These studies have generally been overlooked in efforts to assess the Weed and Seed program but are far from rare and are generally consistent in their findings. Through 2005, JRSA had collected copies of at least 62 local site evaluations. In 2004, JRSA conducted a review of locally initiated site studies and examined 34 that met acceptable methodological standards for consideration as part of the 2004 Weed and Seed Local Evaluation Meta-Analysis. In examining law enforcement/crime control and community safety effects, the authors found 21 of 34 sites reporting positive outcomes in one of these categories, with the other 13 evaluations reporting little or no change or no findings in the component examined.

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None of the local evaluations reported an increase in crime greater than that experienced in the surrounding area.

The above-mentioned studies do not include all of the Officially Recognized Weed and Seed sites and there continues to be gaps in assessment on the local and national level. However, CCDO has taken an aggressive approach in response to criticism that the Weed and Seed strategy has not been properly assessed, including the commitment of substantial financial resources. Overall the studies presented here provide very positive results of Weed and Seed's impact on crime and stabilizing neighborhood conditions. Additional research work can still be done, and this study is another step in showing the positive influence of Weed and Seed in some of the nation's most dangerous neighborhoods.

In reviewing the past national evaluation effort, a major drawback has been that the individualized aspects of each site's strategy have not been recognized. Because the fundamental concept underlying the National Weed and Seed Initiative is the establishment of a locally developed strategy to address the specific crime and related community concerns for each local site, an appropriate evaluation strategy should be based on a similar approach. Consequently, a new national evaluation effort for Weed and Seed should begin by identifying the problems being addressed by the local sites and which sites are involved with each issue. This would enable the evaluators to develop measures that are specific to the community problems being studied for Weed and Seed's impact and to select local sites for inclusion in the evaluation that should reasonably have results for the chosen issues.

## Methodology

This project required the collection and analysis of previously unexamined data in CCDO's administrative records and the merging of some of this information with JRSA's GPRA data. These collection activities included extracting information from the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Grants Management System (GMS) and CCDO's paper files to determine key dates for the implementation of the local sites' strategies and to obtain the OR applications that contain the strategies for recent Weed and Seed sites. The key dates for receipt of OR status and first grant awards allow an analysis of the time between these events and changes in homicide crime patterns associated with these dates. The major task of this project was the development of a typology for the crime and community problems being addressed by the local sites and the solutions identified in the local Weed and Seed strategies. Based on this classification scheme, the existing sites could then be categorized according to the main focus of their strategies.

### *Data Collection*

The analysis of the site OR applications was designed to identify both the site-specific problems and the strategies employed to address neighborhood problems. The process involved an intensive review of multi-year OR data and marked the first attempt by CCDO to systematically analyze multi-year OR application data. The parameters of this project were the examination of available OR applications from sites that applied for and were granted Official Recognition from fiscal year 2000 through fiscal year 2005. JRSA identified 309 sites that had been granted Official Recognition during this time period. Once these sites had been identified, the next step was to locate and collect their relevant grant documents. In addition to the OR applications, other pertinent documentation, such as grant status and funding information, was retrieved via the DOJ GMS files.

The GMS database records grant-specific data, including date of first award, grant amounts, fiscal agent and other data. In recent years GMS's capabilities were expanded to include the ability to store electronic copies of grant applications and supporting documents. JRSA staff worked on site at CCDO offices to retrieve and enter grant information, including; Weed and Seed site name, city and state, OR date, date of first award information, start dates and tracking information related to the retrieval of these electronic records. While much of this information was available via GMS, there were some instances of missing data elements. In cases for which information was unavailable through the GMS system, JRSA staff went through CCDO's paper files for relevant information. Since GMS lacks the capability to electronically extract data for analysis purposes, needed information was retrieved record by record within GMS. These data then had to be manually entered into a project database, slowing the process and increasing the potential for human error.

The collection of OR application information was affected by changes in electronic storage of application data. Beginning in 2004, GMS included the ability to store electronic versions of OR applications. Prior to the 2004 application cycle, CCDO relied almost exclusively upon hardcopies stored on-site at the CCDO office. To reduce the burden of converting paper copies to electronic files, sites granted OR prior to 2004 were contacted in hopes of obtaining electronic

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copies of these earlier applications. A number of sites were able to provide electronic versions of their original applications. All paper copies were electronically scanned, converted to PDF format and saved for future reference. The PDF format was chosen to ensure the integrity of the electronic documents. For this reason, all existing electronic copies were also converted into a PDF format before being saved. Along with this report, JRSA will provide CCDO with electronic copies of the reviewed OR materials.

This report is based on a review of 273 of the 309 OR applications that were granted Official Recognition status between fiscal years 2000 and 2005. Thirty-six of the 309 sites could not be included in this analysis because the OR applications for 26 sites could not be located in CCDO's files, while 10 others failed to clearly state the problems and their proposed strategies and therefore classification of these OR applications was not possible.

### *Data Analysis*

The OR application process allows the applicants to indicate any problems confronting their communities and any strategies they plan to implement to address their communities' problems. This latitude in selection coupled with the differences in local communities' challenges introduces a wide degree of variation in the stated problems and strategies. The sites describe these issues in a narrative text with optional charts and other supporting data. Given the unstructured nature of the strategy documents, a process was developed for the consistent classification of sites by discrete categories of problems and solutions that could then be used for future performance and evaluation studies.

To effectively analyze the reported problems and strategies, a categorization scheme was developed that enabled the grouping of these items based on observed commonalities. The categories used in this scheme were developed utilizing a random sample review process that included 40 applications. Based on this review, 73 strategy types were identified (See Appendix A for full list of strategy types). Each of these strategies fall within one of the four broader Weed and Seed elements—Intensive Law Enforcement, Community Policing, Prevention Intervention and Treatment, and Neighborhood Restoration. Following the development of these strategy types, the 40 applications were reviewed again and coded to reflect problems and strategies among the categories. The applications were reviewed by at least two and up to four different reviewers to ensure consistency in the review process. Adjustments to the categories were made whenever reviewer interpretations were inconsistent, and a key was developed for the classification of common activities that could reasonably be assigned to more than one of the strategy types (See Appendix B).

Due to the local nature of the Weed and Seed program, sites applying for Official Recognition have a great deal of latitude in selecting the problems that they intend to address. The initial OR analysis revealed that the 273 applications contained 2,083 problems, which included some repetitions of issues across sites. Also, some strategies may refer to crime problems in general, while others identify specific concerns, such as drugs or weapons violations. Attempting to analyze 2,083 problems without categorization would be extremely difficult; therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, these problems were grouped into 15 problem area categories.

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The decision to place a problem into a specific category was based on commonalities within the descriptions of the problem. In a substantial number of cases, the applications only provided general descriptions of their problems. To capture these responses, a series of general categories were developed. More specific categories were created for instances in which sufficient detail was provided. For example, if a site listed educational concerns, it was grouped into the Educational Concerns–General category. If the site reported that they had school dropout problem, it was grouped into the Educational Concerns-Dropout category. Therefore, the number of problems reported in the general categories may not equal the combined number of problems reported in the related subcategories.

The following analysis is based on the review and classification process described above, and is the first step in the development of a performance measures guide for Weed and Seed sites. It details the common problems and strategies for reducing crime and disorder cited by Weed and Seed sites in their OR applications. By classifying these efforts, it should be possible to develop performance assessments that more accurately reflect the intent of Weed and Seed grantees.

## Community Problem Identification and Site Classification

Weed and Seed strategies are developed for at-risk areas that face a multitude of challenges and a disproportionate level of offending. This is evident from the large number of problems referenced in the OR applications. In the 273 applications, 2,083 problem citations were identified through the review process. These were grouped into 16 broad categories. For eight of the general problem categories, the sites provided sufficiently detailed descriptions and supporting data that these could be further broken down into subcategories. The following section details the community problems reported in the applications and the categorization of these problems.

**Table P1**

<b>Problem Category</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of All Problems</b>	<b>Problem Category</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of All Problems</b>
<b>Blight</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>6.67%</b>	<b>Family/Life Skills</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1.25%</b>
<b>Code Violation / Enforcement</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0.62%</b>	<b>Fear of Crime</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1.63%</b>
<b>Community Cohesion</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>4.99%</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>2.45%</b>
General Community Problems	48	2.30%	General Health Problems	28	1.34%
Lack of Community Involvement	33	1.58%	Teen Pregnancy	23	1.10%
Traffic	23	1.10%	<b>Housing</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>5.52%</b>
<b>Crime</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>39.99%</b>	<b>Offender-Related</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0.67%</b>
Drug Crime	225	10.80%	Reentry	10	0.48%
Violent Crime	150	7.20%	Probation	4	0.19%
Gang-Related Crime	98	4.70%	<b>Police-Related</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>2.26%</b>
Juvenile Crime	95	4.56%	<b>Service / Program Gap</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>6.34%</b>
General Crime Problem	65	3.12%	General Services / Programs	82	3.94%
Domestic / Family Violence	57	2.74%	Youth Services / Programs	33	1.58%
Property Crime	55	2.64%	Adult Services / Programs	7	0.34%
Weapons Offenses	48	2.30%	Elderly Services / Programs	6	0.29%
Prostitution	40	1.92%	Reentry Services / Programs	4	0.19%
<b>Economic</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>10.56%</b>	<b>Substance Abuse</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>3.36%</b>
Unemployment / Underemployment	101	4.85%	<b>Youth –Related</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>4.08%</b>
Poverty	64	3.07%	Alternatives for Youth	48	2.30%
General Economic Problems	55	2.64%	General Youth Problems	23	1.10%
<b>Education</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>7.15%</b>	At-risk Youth	14	0.67%
Truancy	57	2.74%	<b>Other</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>2.45%</b>
General Education Problems	40	1.92%			
Education Level	26	1.25%			
Dropouts	22	1.06%			
Literacy	4	0.19%			

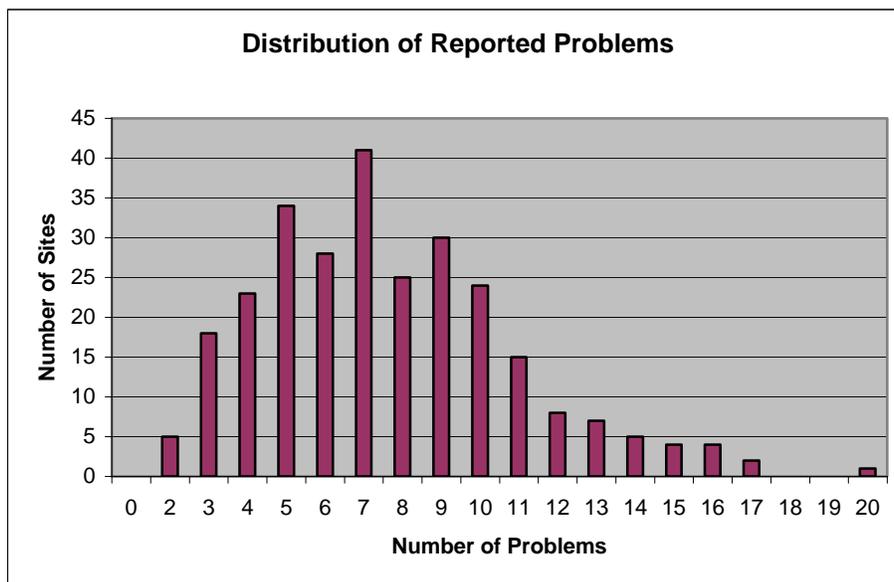
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Table P1 displays the overall frequency of problems being cited in the site strategies. Due to the pattern of multiple problem topics across most sites and the potential for multiple subcategories of a general problem category (e.g., both drugs and gangs being identified as concerns for the same local site), the problem counts may exceed the actual number of sites working on a specific issue. However, the problem counts indicate the relative incidence of each concern across the site strategies.

Perhaps appropriate to a U.S. DOJ-sponsored initiative, crime-related problems are the most frequently cited concerns. Reflecting the comprehensive approach of the Weed and Seed strategy to crime control, the majority of the problems being cited are non-justice related topics.

An examination of the distribution of reported problems revealed that the fewest number of problems reported by any site was two and that the largest was 20. The greatest number of sites, 41, identified seven problems, while the smallest number of sites, one, identified 20 different problems. The mean number of problems was eight, while the median and modal numbers of problems were both seven. A distribution of the reported problems by the number of sites can be seen below in Chart P1.

Chart P1



### *Description of Community Problem Categories*

**Blight** refers to a host of issues that were described as having a deleterious effect on the physical environment of the designated Weed and Seed target areas. Some of the issues grouped into this category included, but were not limited to, graffiti, dilapidated buildings, abandoned cars, neglected properties and litter. More than half of the applications, 140, referred to some form of blight as being a problem.

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**Code Violations/Enforcement** represents the opportunity to use city or jurisdiction codes to improve conditions in the Weed and Seed area by pressuring property owners to adhere to community standards and to take a more proactive approach to combating neighborhood disorder. While most of the identified issues involved violations, some did involve effective enforcement of existing codes. Thirteen sites indicated that these issues were a problem in their designated Weed and Seed areas.

The **Community Cohesion Problems** category includes a variety of problems that negatively impact the community as a whole, but were not appropriate for assigning to the other categories. Because of the detailed descriptions provided by the local sites, many of the references to problems in this category could be characterized by the three subcategories—General Community Problems, Lack of Community Involvement and Traffic Problems. Traffic Problems subcategory involves issues related to traffic safety concerns, such as speeding. The General category consists of a variety of problems, including, but not limited to, immigration or minority population issues, transient populations, poor lighting, and community pride. Combined, the sites reported a total of 157 Community Cohesion Problems. The majority of these, 100, did not warrant a separate subcategory and were therefore grouped into the General category. Lack of Community Involvement was the most commonly identified community problem, followed by Traffic Problems.

**Crime Problems** were not only most frequently reported, but they were also described with greater specificity. For this reason, Crime Problems were grouped into nine subcategories. While most of these subcategories are self-explanatory, some deserve further explanation. The Weapons Offenses category consists of gun and other weapons-related crimes, many of which were simply identified as 'weapons' related, without reference to a specific type of weapon. Domestic violence and child abuse/neglect were each reported frequently enough to warrant being separate from the general crime, but not frequently enough to distinguish each crime from one another. As a result, these crimes were collapsed into one subcategory, Domestic/Family Violence.

The **Economic Problems** category contains General Economic Issues, Poverty, and Unemployment/Underemployment. While most sites specifically identified unemployment, there were a substantial number that identified problems closely related to unemployment. These problems mainly dealt with the overall employability of residents and included problems such as lack of requisite job skill. The General category included problems such as lack of investment in the community, lack of local businesses, and poor tax base. Since most applications did not detail poverty and how it was measured, the Poverty subcategory included references to poverty, including, but not limited to, people not earning a livable wage, children living in poverty, large numbers of residents on public assistance, and lack of financial resources.

**Education Problems** were grouped into the following five subcategories; Truancy, Education Level, Dropouts, Literacy, and General. As was the case with other general categories, these references were assigned to a specific subcategory when sufficient detail was provided; any nonspecific problem statements were put into the General subcategory. Some examples of

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General Education Problems are education, lack of education, school in dire need of repair, and strained educational assistance.

**Program/Service Gap Problems** were commonly reported, in part because every Weed and Seed Strategy must identify both existing community programs and unmet service-related needs. These concerns form the Program/Service Gap Problem category. Whenever possible, these unmet needs were assigned to subcategories by the intended target population—general, youth, adult, elderly or returning offenders.

**Family/Life Skills Problems** included an array of issues such as lack of parental involvement, poor parenting skill, marginal life skills, and poor personal financial management. No subcategory of the Family/Life Skills group was reported frequently enough to warrant its own category, therefore, all of these problems were included under the main category name.

**Fear of Crime** are expressions of concerns about public safety concerns that are widespread and pervasive and, if left unaddressed, will contribute to further community deterioration as residents and businesses as flee an area. While some applications did contain other terms such as “feeling unsafe” and “fear of retribution from criminals,” most specifically listed “fear of crime.” Since no more specific problems related to fear of crime emerged, all of the problems dealing with this issue were grouped into this one category.

**Housing Problems** were frequently identified in the sites’ strategies. However, while a large number of applications indicated Housing Problems as a concern, these were so closely related that further distinctions were not reasonable. Some examples of entries in this category are lack of affordable housing, poor quality housing, and lack of home ownership.

**Health Problems** included a host of problems like community health, lack of affordable healthcare, lack of healthcare providers and problems with healthcare. Only one health-related problem, Teen Pregnancy, was mentioned frequently enough to warrant its own category.

The **Police – Related Problems** category was mostly composed of problems related to the relationship between the police and the community. However, this category was kept general in nature to capture other problems such as low visibility of officers, lack of officer training, poor inter-agency cooperation and insufficient police capacity.

**Substance Abuse Problems** contains entries dealing with the full range of alcohol and other drugs—some dealing with one of these elements, others with multiple issues. It includes responses such as substance abuse, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and alcohol and drug abuse.

**Youth Related Problems** reported in the applications could be classified into one of three subcategories General, Alternatives for Youth and At-Risk Youth. In many cases, the applications simply listed that there was a need for Alternatives for Youth. When more specific information was provided, the more commonly mentioned alternatives were lack of after-school activities and recreational activities. The program shortages discussed in this section differ from

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those discussed in Service/Program Gap section, because these involve needs for recreation and entertainment resources.

**At-Risk Youth** was a difficult problem to classify. There are varying definitions for at-risk, and any youth living in a Weed and Seed area could be considered at-risk. The youth could be at-risk of becoming delinquent, succumbing to possible health threats, or being subjected to a variety of other risk factors. For this reason, an application was only classified as having a problem with at-risk youth if it contained that specific phrasing. The General subcategory was used to capture the other Youth-Related Problems that were either too few in number or too vague to further classify. This subcategory included problems such as unsupervised youth, youth harassing other residents, and court-involved youth.

### *Frequency of Problems Identified by Sites*

#### *Crime*

As previously mentioned, crime-related problems were most frequently identified. The applications contained a combined total of 833 references to various crime problems, which represents 40% of the total 2,083 problems cited in the 273 applications. In an effort to better describe the specific nature of these crimes, they were classified into nine subcategories. The most frequently identified crime problems were drug crime, violent crime, gang-related crime, and juvenile crime. Combined, these crimes accounted for over two-thirds of the identified crime problems.

In terms of local sites, 99% of the sites identified one or more crime-related issues as concerns being addressed through their strategies (see Table P2). However, for the specific crime subcategories, only drugs and violent crime were cited by a majority of sites. The other crime subcategories were mentioned by a third or less of the sites.

In this report the term “drug crime” refers to the illegal distribution, purchase, and/or possession of narcotics. Not only was drug crime the most frequently identified crime problem, but it was also the most frequently identified problem overall. Drug crime was reported as a problem in 226 of the applications accounting for over one-quarter of all the crime problems and over 10% of all problems identified.

The next most common crime problem was violent crime. While most sites listed specific violent crimes, many simply identified violent crime in general as being a problem in their targeted area. Violent crime was listed as a problem in 150 of the 273 applications, accounting for almost one in five identified crime problems and about 7% of all problems.

Problems classified as gang-related crime were also common. Ninety-eight applications detailed some form of gang-related crime as being a problem in their designated area. Crimes classified as juvenile crime were those instances for which the application made specific reference to the

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offenders being juveniles<sup>1</sup>. Combined, the applications contained a total of 95 instances of juvenile crime problems. Both gang-related and juvenile crimes represent a little over 10% of all crime problems and less than 5% of all problems.

The general crime subcategory represents all crimes that did not fit into any of the other crime-type subcategories. The crimes in this subcategory were either too few in number or were described in such a vague manner that the no further categorization was possible. For these reasons, these crimes were placed into a single subcategory of miscellaneous concerns.

**Table P2**

Crime Problem	Number of Sites	Percent of Sites
<b>Crime problem specified</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>98.53%</b>
<b>No identified crime problem</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.47%</b>
<b>Type of Crime Specified</b>		
Drug crime	225	82.42%
Violent crime	150	54.95%
Gang crime	98	35.90%
Juvenile crime	95	34.80%
Crime (general)	65	23.81%
Domestic violence/child abuse	57	20.88%
Property crime	55	20.15%
Weapons violations	48	17.58%
Prostitution	40	14.65%
<b>Total</b>	<b>833</b>	

*Economic Problems*

Economic problems were the second most frequently identified problem. There were a total of 220 references to economic problems in the 273 applications, accounting for 10.5 % of the total number of problems. This category was broken down into three subcategories—general, poverty and unemployment/underemployment. As was the case with crime, problems that were described too generally to be classified further were included in the general subcategory.

Of all the reported economic problems, unemployment/underemployment was the most common. Combined, the applications listed this as a problem 101 times, accounting for just over 45% of economic problems and almost 5% of all problems. Poverty accounted for almost one-third of economic problems and 3% of all problems. There were also a total of 55 general economic problems identified, accounting for another quarter of the identified economic problems.

Of all local sites, 153 or 56% have some economic-related issues in their strategies (see Table P3). Depending on the nature of the economic problems, this may affect roughly a fifth to a third

<sup>1</sup> Truancy, however, was grouped into the Education category rather than a crime category.

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of the sites. Also, economic conditions, such as poverty and unemployment that could be viewed as contributing factors to a community's overall distress, may be more successfully addressed as the area's persistent crime problems are brought under control and may require longer term solutions that would be more likely components of subsequent iterations of a site's strategy.

**Table P3**

<b>Economic Problem</b>	<b>Number of Sites</b>	<b>Percent of Sites</b>
<b>Economic problem specified</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>56.04%</b>
<b>No identified Economic problem</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>43.96%</b>
<b>Type of Economic Problem Specified</b>		
Unemployment/underemployment	101	37.00%
Poverty	64	23.44%
General economic problems	55	20.15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	

*Education Problems*

Problems related to education were the next most commonly identified problem type in the 273 applications. A total of 114 site strategies indicated that they had an education-related problem that impacted the residents of their designated area (see table P4). Truancy accounted for the largest number of education problems, identified in 57 or 21% of all sites and accounting for almost 40% of the education problems indicated. An additional 40 general problems were described in the applications accounting for over one-quarter of the education problems. The remaining education problems related to Education Level, Dropouts, and Literacy accounted for another third of these problems, though Literacy was far less often mentioned than the preceding subcategories.

**Table P4**

<b>Education Problem</b>	<b>Number of Sites</b>	<b>Percent of Sites</b>
<b>Education problem specified</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>41.76%</b>
<b>No identified Education problem</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>58.24%</b>
<b>Type of Education Problem Specified</b>		
Truancy	57	20.88%
General education problems	40	14.65%
Education level	26	9.52%
Dropouts	22	8.06%
Literacy	4	1.47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	

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*Blight*

Blight was the fourth most common problem and, according to the “Broken Windows Theory” of crime control, can be a significant factor contributing to existing community crime conditions. As was explained above, blight is used to describe a wide variety of problems that have a deleterious effect on the physical environment of the designated communities. While many applications contained references specifically to blight, others listed the problems individually. Due to the diversity of blight-related problems reported, it was not possible to further classify these problems. Therefore, these problems were combined into one larger Blight category. Of the 273 strategies, 139 sites, or 51%, included blight as a problem affecting their communities. This represents 6.7% of total number of identified problems.

*Service/Program Gaps*

The next most frequently identified problem type after blight concerned the provision, delivery, or availability of services and programs. There were 132 references to these problems for 102, or 37 % of all sites, accounting for over 5% of the total number of problems (see Table P5). The greatest number of these applications, 83, contained references to this problem that did not identify a specific target population. These general references accounted for three of five service or program gap problems and about 4% of all identified problems. Thirty-three applications outlined youth-related service or program gaps, while the remaining three populations mentioned in the applications were adults, elderly and returning offenders. These populations accounted for 13% of the service/program gap problems as a group.

**Table P5**

<b>Service/Program Gap Problems</b>	<b>Number of Sites</b>	<b>Percent of Sites</b>
<b>Service/program gap problem specified</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>37.36%</b>
<b>No identified service/program gap problem</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>62.64%</b>
<b>Type of Service/Program Gap Specified</b>		
General services/program	82	30.04%
Youth services/program	33	12.09%
Adult services/program	7	2.56%
Elderly services/program	6	2.20%
Reentry services/program	4	1.47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	

*Housing Problems*

Housing Problems contains a variety of housing-related conditions in the Weed and Seed areas. Some of the problems contained in the applications were lack of affordable housing, sub-standard housing, and lack of home ownership. There were not sufficient numbers of any

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specific problem to warrant the creation of subcategories. Combined, the 273 applications contained 116 references to housing problems making it the sixth most frequently mentioned problem type representing just over 5% of the total number of recognized problems.

*Community Cohesion Problems*

The Community Cohesion Problems category was the next most frequently identified problem type after housing problems. Eighty-six strategies, or 32% of all sites, mentioned negative conditions in this category. In all, community problems accounted for 105 problems, or 5% of the total number of identified problems. This category includes three subcategories—general community problems, lack of community involvement and traffic. The greatest number of applications, though, outlined problems that were described in such a vague manner or so unique to their community that they were not classifiable beyond general community problems. The single most common identifiable problem listed in the applications was a lack of community involvement. Thirty-four applications, or 32% of those listing Community Problems, indicated that community involvement was an issue that was negatively affecting their designated area. Of the applications that identified a community problem, 23 identified some type of traffic concern. See Table P6 for a breakdown of the community cohesion problems.

**Table P6**

Community Cohesion Problem	Number of Sites	Percent of Sites
Community problem specified	86	31.50%
No identified community problem	187	68.50%
<b>Type of Community Cohesion Problem Specified</b>		
General community problems	48	17.58%
Lack of community involvement	33	12.09%
Traffic	23	8.42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	

*Remaining Community Problems*

The remaining nine categories accounted for a combined total of 391 problems or almost one-fifth of the total problems. These categories were broken down as Youth-Related, Substance Abuse, Other, Health, Police-Related, Fear of Crime, Family/Life Skills, Offender-Related, and Code Violations/Enforcement. There were a total of 85 references to youth-related problems, of which 48 identified a lack of alternatives for youth, 23 identified general youth-related problems, and 14 identified at-risk youth.

There were 70 instances in which Substance Abuse was identified as a problem accounting for barely 3% of all problems. The problems that could not be classified or that did not warrant their own category were grouped together into the Other Problems category. A similar number of Health-related issues were found, half of which were identified as related to teen pregnancy. The

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Other Problems and Health-related categories were noted in 52 and 51 instances, respectively, numbering about 2.5% of the total number of problems each.

While most Police-related problems dealt with the relationship between the police and the community, the Police-related problems category also included other problems, such as equipment and staffing issues. Police-related problems were reported in 47 instances making up just over 2% of the total problems. Fear of Crime was identified as a problem in 34 instances while there were 26 instances of Family or Life Skills as a problem.

One of the least often mentioned problems include Offender-related problems accounting for only 14 of the 2,083 problems. Most of these identified returning offenders as the main issue, while the remaining Offender-related problems identified probationers as the issue. The final problem category is Code Violations/Enforcement. The applications contained only thirteen instances where code violations or enforcement was cited as a problem. See Table P7 below for a detailed breakout of these less numerous problem categories and subcategories.

**Table P7**

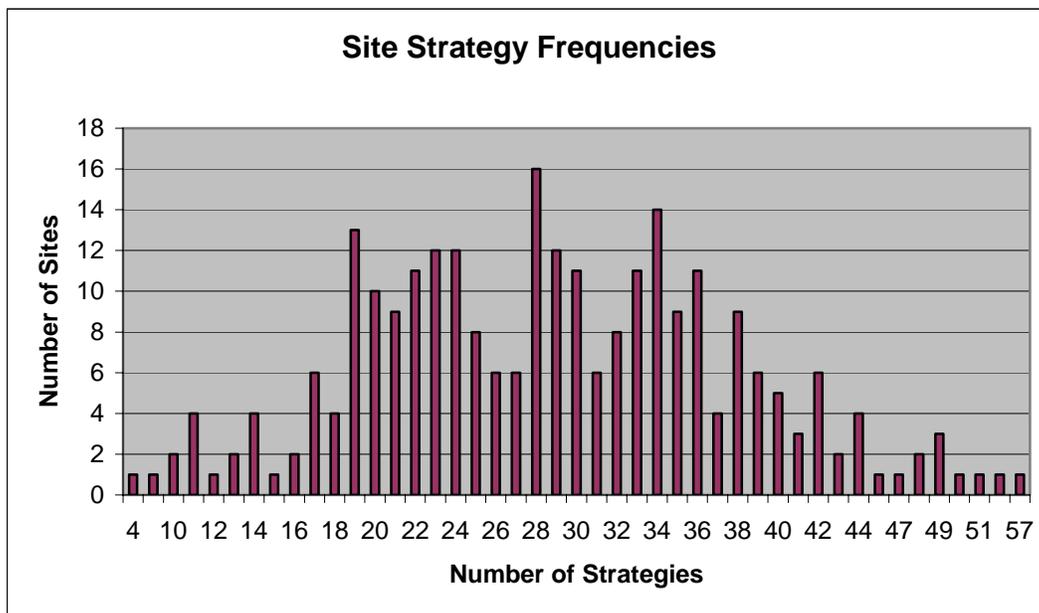
Misc. Problem Category	Total	% of All Sites
<b>Youth - Related</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>31.14%</b>
Alternatives for youth	48	17.58%
General youth problems	23	8.42%
At-risk youth	14	5.13%
<b>Substance Abuse</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>25.64%</b>
<b>Other Problems</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>18.68%</b>
<b>Health Problems</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>18.68%</b>
General health problems	28	10.26%
Teen pregnancy	23	8.42%
<b>Police - Related</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>17.22%</b>
<b>Fear of Crime</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>12.45%</b>
<b>Family/Life Skills Issues</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9.52%</b>
<b>Offender - Related</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5.13%</b>
Reentry	10	3.66%
Probation	4	1.47%
<b>Code Enforcement</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4.76%</b>

## Identification of Strategic Solutions and Site Classification

In order to group the OR applications by commonalities among the strategic solutions being pursued, a coding scheme was developed. This coding scheme consisted of the four overall strategy elements and a subset of 69 activity types. The four strategy elements reflect the core elements of the Weed and Seed Strategy, which are Law Enforcement (LE), Community Policing (CP), Prevention/ Intervention/ Treatment (PIT), and Neighborhood Restoration (NR). The 69 activity types each belong to the most appropriate strategy element and can be viewed in Appendix A.

The review of the OR applications revealed that most sites were implementing an array of activities to address the problems affecting their targeted neighborhoods. Combined, the 273 applications contained 7,884 activities. The smallest number of activities reported in any application was four, while the largest was 57. The mean number of activities was 28.88, the median was 29, and the mode was 28. See Chart S1 below.

**Chart S1**



### *Law Enforcement Activities (LE)*

The Law Enforcement strategy element encompasses a variety of enforcement-oriented activities that are designed to address the crime problems in the designated areas. These activities do not include police activities that are intended to bolster relationships between the police and the communities that they serve. Upon examination of the Law Enforcement (LE) activities, 15 activity types were developed.

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Combined, the 273 OR applications contained 1,757 references to LE activities, which accounted for almost one-quarter of all of the identified activities. All but one strategy contained at least one LE activity. See Table LE1.

**Table LE1**

Law Enforcement Activity	Frequency	Percent of Sites
<b>Law Enforcement activity specified</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>99.63%</b>
<b>No Law Enforcement activity specified</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.37%</b>
<b>Type of Law Enforcement Activity Specified</b>		
Intensive drug enforcement	226	82.78%
Intensive supply reduction	91	33.33%
Intensive demand reduction	53	19.41%
Prosecution/sentencing coordination	184	67.40%
Increased police patrol/visibility	153	56.04%
Task forces	148	54.21%
Targeted crime enforcement	142	52.01%
Known/repeat offender strategies	128	46.89%
Juvenile crime enforcement	117	42.86%
Parole/probation strategies	108	39.56%
Public order crime enforcement	106	38.83%
Gang reduction strategies	104	38.10%
Weapons reduction strategies	96	35.16%
Use of technology	91	33.33%
Hotspot policing	67	24.54%
Other law enforcement strategies	52	19.05%
Traffic violation enforcement	35	12.82%
<b>Total Law Enforcement Activities</b>	<b>1,757</b>	

A closer examination of the LE activity types revealed that intensive drug enforcement was the most common LE activity type employed by the sites. In all, 226 of the 273 (83%) of the applications indicated that intensive drug enforcement was part of their overall strategy. Whenever possible, the focus of these efforts was also determined. Of the 226 applications that detailed intensive drug enforcement strategies, 91 indicated that these efforts were focused on reducing the supply of drugs, while 53 indicated that these efforts were focused on reducing the demand for drugs. This represents almost one-third and one-fifth, respectively, of all applications. No focus could be determined in the remaining 66 cases.

The next most frequently identified LE activities fell under the prosecution/sentencing coordination category. These activities involved inter-agency cooperation designed to target criminal offenders in the designated Weed and Seed neighborhoods. The analysis showed that 184 of the 273 (67%) applications identified this type of activity as part of their overall LE strategy.

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The next three most common LE activities were increased patrol/visibility, task forces, and targeted crime enforcement. A total of 153 applications (56%) identified the use of increased patrol/visibility, 148 applications (54%) identified the use of task forces, and 142 applications (52%) identified some form of targeted crime enforcement

***Community Policing Activities (CP)***

Community Policing activities are designed to foster the relationships between these groups in communities—residents, stakeholders and local law enforcement officials. The community policing (CP) activities were divided into 13 activity-type categories, which are listed in Table CP2.

The 273 applications contained a total of 1,491 CP activities. The maximum number of identified activities was 12. As was the case with LE activities, only one site failed to identify a single CP activity. See Table CP1, below.

**Table CP1**

<b>Total Number of Community Policing Activities</b>	<b>1,491</b>
Minimum	0
Maximum	12
Mean	5.46
Median	5
Mode	6

The most common types of CP activities that the sites were conducting were those aimed at building or strengthening police-community relations. Of the 273 applications, 211 (77%) indicated that this was a focus of their strategy. Another commonly identified activity was the use of crime watch /resident patrol programs. A total of 195 applications (73%) specified that these types of programs were part of their overall strategy.

The next two most commonly identified community policing activities were community awareness and education. While these activities seem very similar, for this analysis the following distinction was made. Community awareness refers to activities such as officer-initiated referrals or efforts to make community residents aware of the department’s activities or the availability of community or social services. Community education refers to activities such as classes or the distribution of information pertaining to topics such as crime prevention or individual/human rights.

A nearly equal number of applications identified the use of each of these activities. A total of 179 applications (66%) reported that increasing community awareness was part of their overall strategy, while 178 (65%) reported activities designed to educate the community. The next most commonly identified CP activity type were those activities focused on youth. Youth-focused activities were identified in 147 of the 273 applications (54%). A complete listing of the 13 CP activities can be seen below in Table CP2.

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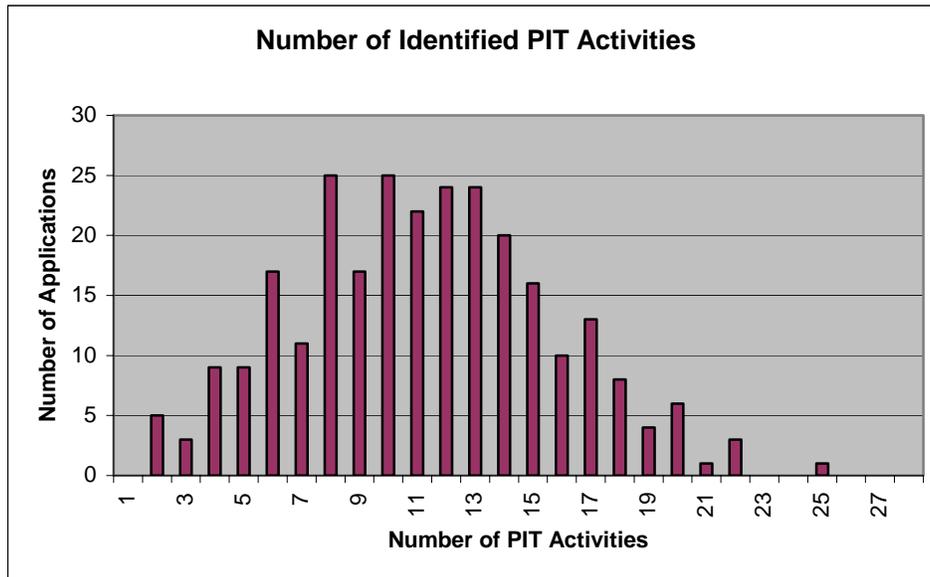
**Table CP2**

<b>Community Policing Activity</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent of Sites</b>
<b>Community Policing activity specified</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>99.63%</b>
<b>No Community Policing activity specified</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.37%</b>
<b>Type of Community Policing Activity Specified</b>		
Police-community relationship building	211	77.29%
Crime watch/ resident patrol	195	71.43%
Community awareness	179	65.57%
Community education	178	65.20%
Youth-focused efforts	147	53.85%
Training for law enforcement personnel	96	35.16%
Bike/horse patrol	92	33.70%
Foot patrol	92	33.70%
Hotlines/anonymous reporting	74	27.11%
Substations	69	25.27%
Improve public perceptions of safety	65	23.81%
Senior citizen focus	50	18.32%
Other	43	15.75%
<b>Total Community Policing Activities</b>	<b>1491</b>	

***Prevention/Intervention/Treatment (PIT)***

Prevention/Intervention/Treatment (PIT) includes a wide variety of social programs and services that are designed to address various problems or needs in the communities. Governmental agencies or non-profit community groups commonly provide these services. From the OR applications, a total of 28 different PIT activities were identified, which are listed in Table PIT2.

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**Table PIT 1**

<b>Total Number of Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Activities</b>	<b>3,077</b>
Minimum	2
Maximum	25
Mean	11.27
Median	11
Mode	10

Combined, the 273 sites listed a total of 3,077 PIT activities. The maximum number of identified PIT activities was 25 and the minimum reported number was two. Both the mean and median number of identified activities was 11 (see Table PIT1 and Chart PIT1).

An examination of the reported PIT information revealed that the most commonly identified PIT activities were those directly related to Safe Havens. A total of 228 applications (84%) indicated that Safe Havens were a major focus of their PIT activities. The second most common activity types were those related to academic/enrichment programs. For the purpose of this analysis, these programs were defined as programs or activities involving arts, culture, homework assistance, and/or tutoring. Of the 273 applications, 202 (74%) indicated that they had some form of academic/enrichment program.

Life skills/family programs were also clearly a priority for the sites. This category was defined as programs or activities involving counseling, budgeting, leadership training and parenting training. Combined, 195 applications (73%) indicated that their effort included these types of programs. A similar number of applications (194) indicated that they had or planned to implement programs or activities intended to provide residents with employability/job training. Other common PIT program or activity types were Community/Social Service Access, Mentoring, and Drug and Alcohol Education/Prevention. Community/Social Service Access

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strategies were defined as activities directly related to accessibility of programs and involve such things as centralized service locations, community service centers, and transportation to and from service providers. A review of the applications revealed that 178 of the 273 sites (65%) referenced these types of activities. Mentoring and Drug and Alcohol Education Prevention Strategies appeared with a similar frequency, being noted 168 and 166 times, respectively. A complete listing of the 28 PIT activities can be seen below in Table PIT2. Additionally, an explanation of the various activities and or programs included in each activity type can be found in Appendix B.

**Table PIT2**

<b>Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Activity</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent of Sites</b>
<b>Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment activity specified</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>No prevention, Intervention, and Treatment activity specified</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Type of Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Activity Specified</b>		
Safe Havens	228	83.52%
Academic enrichment	202	73.99%
Life skills/family programs	195	71.43%
Employability/job training	194	71.06%
Recreation	184	67.40%
Community/social service access	178	65.20%
Mentoring	168	61.54%
Drug and alcohol education/prevention	166	60.81%
Juvenile justice programs	142	52.01%
Drug and alcohol treatment	129	47.25%
Community service volunteer programs	121	44.32%
Health-related	107	39.19%
Job placement	96	35.16%
Other	91	33.33%
Domestic violence prevention/intervention	82	30.04%
Resource directory	79	28.94%
Truancy programs	79	28.94%
Gang prevention	77	28.21%
Conflict resolution	75	27.47%
Literacy	72	26.37%
Reentry initiatives	72	26.37%
GED/school completion	64	23.44%
Victim services	60	21.98%
Boys and Girls Clubs	51	18.68%
English as a Second Language (ESL)	44	16.12%
Housing assistance	44	16.12%
Internship programs	40	14.65%
Teen pregnancy programs	37	13.55%

***Neighborhood Restoration Activities (NR)***

Neighborhood Restoration (NR) refers to an assortment of programs and activities that share the overall goals of stimulating and revitalizing both the economy and physical appearance of the neighborhoods. In all, 13 neighborhood restoration categories were developed. These 13 activity types are listed below.

Combined, the 273 sites identified 1,425 NR activities. The maximum number of NR-related activities for a site was 12 and three sites did not indicate the use of any NR activities (see Table NR1).

Table NR1

<b>Total Number of Neighborhood Restoration Activities</b>	<b>1,425</b>
Maximum Reported Number	12
Minimum Reported Number	0
Mean Reported Number	5.8
Median Reported Number	6.0

The most common types of NR activities outlined in the strategies were those dealing with community space restoration. These activities involved restoring previously unusable public spaces and included activities such as neighborhood, park and vacant lot cleanup projects. In all, 226 strategies (83%) contained descriptions of various community space restoration activities.

The second most commonly identified type of NR was code enforcement. Based on the information contained in the applications, it was clear that code enforcement was a tool utilized to address a wide array of issues ranging from problem establishments to absentee property owners. A total of 189 applications (69%) indicated that code enforcement was a characteristic of their NR activities and their overall strategy.

The next most frequently identified NR activity was housing improvement/restoration. These activities generally included assisting residents with making necessary repairs to their homes or properties. The elderly were a major focus of many of these initiatives. In all, 173 applications (63%) indicated these types of activities as being part of their strategy. Other commonly indicated strategies include Community Involvement Initiatives, Home Ownership, and Public Infrastructure Improvement activities. Of the 273 applications, 167 (61%) indicated that Community Involvement Initiatives were a focus of their strategy. An equal number of applications (127) indicated that Home Ownership programs and Public Infrastructure Improvement were aspects of their overall strategy.

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**Table NR2**

<b>Neighborhood Restoration Activity</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent of Sites</b>
<b>Neighborhood Restoration activity specified</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>98.90%</b>
<b>No Neighborhood Restoration activity specified</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.10%</b>
<b>Type of Neighborhood Restoration Activity Specified</b>		
Community space restoration	226	82.78%
Code enforcement	189	69.23%
Housing improvement/ rehab	173	63.37%
Community involvement initiatives	167	61.17%
Home ownership	127	46.52%
Public infrastructure improvement	127	46.52%
Small business development	118	43.22%
New home development	92	33.70%
Landlord/property owner training	87	31.87%
Loan programs	83	30.40%
Building demolition	71	26.01%
Entrepreneurial training	54	19.78%
Other	45	16.48%
<b>Total Neighborhood Restoration Activities</b>	<b>1559</b>	

This analysis has demonstrated that while there are many commonalities across sites in the problems and solutions identified in their strategies, individual sites may have substantial variations in the number and specific nature of the issues being addressed and the services and activities being employed. This has major implications for future performance measurement and evaluation efforts for framing specific research questions and site selection.

Because useful performance measures should reflect those changes that result from Weed and Seed efforts, it is these strategies that should serve as the basis for developing indicators of local sites' successes. Considering that this analysis found a substantial number of site strategies, which do not clearly present a linkage between the identified community problems and the solutions proposed, planning for future measures should recognize this difficulty. As expected, the comprehensive nature of the Weed and Seed philosophy, combined with the large number of applicants, results in a great variety of strategies and potential sources for data and measures of efficacy. Later in this report, some performance measures are recommended based in large part on the strategies and problems laid out in this section. Following are suggestions for future problem and strategy definition by applicants seeking to achieve OR status and the possibility of federal funding for their Weed and Seed effort.

## Performance Measure Recommendations

As with the wide range of problems and strategies found among Weed and Seed sites, there is a wide range of strategies used by program evaluators in conducting reviews of Weed and Seed efforts on the local level. Many locally initiated site studies have been, and continue to be, conducted. These studies have been funded in part by Special Emphasis grants from CCDO, other supplemental grants, and local sources.

With the local origin of these efforts, the methodology used is often a product of individual site strategies, availability of preferred data, and the strategies of individual evaluators. The strength of this variability is that local evaluators can examine aspects that are most germane to the specific strategies in place in their community. A weakness is that the evaluations are less comparable than if there had been consistent standards followed for the types of performance measures to be used. For example, several site evaluations are based on the effect of Weed and Seed efforts on reported crime in the Weed and Seed area, while others base conclusions of efficacy on changes in the number of risk factors to which youth are subject in target areas. Both types of reports allow for judgments on whether an effect was seen in Weed and Seed areas, but comparisons of relative success (or failure) become problematic.

In order to facilitate cross-site comparability, this report includes suggested performance measures for Weed and Seed sites. These suggested performance measures should not be viewed as a limit to variables that can be examined by Weed and Seed sites sponsoring or conducting an assessment of their efforts, but a guide of variables to be examined in addition to other data that will then allow for a more unified look across site evaluations. See below for specific recommended performance measures for selected common strategies from the review of OR materials.

Activity	Performance Measure	Notes
Intensive Drug Enforcement	Reported drug arrest rates for sales and possession in the intensive drug enforcement area	For this measure, as with all measures in this table, it is critical that there be consistency in the reporting period. Crime data are currently reported to CCDO most often on an annual basis, with a given calendar year compared to prior and later years. Snapshots may also be used (for example, comparing January 2005 to January 2006), but limiting the pool of data increases the probability that unrelated factors (such as a warm week in the month of January) may influence your measure. At a minimum, measures should be taken annually.

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Activity	Performance Measure	Notes
Prosecution/Sentencing Coordination	Survey of criminal justice participants (e.g. police, prosecutors) to determine perceptions of coordination	Example may be annual survey questions such as "How would you rate cooperation between police and local prosecutors for the sentencing of repeat offenders?" with an ordinal scale for reply.
Increased Police Patrol/ -and- Foot/Bike/Horse Patrol	Community survey question to determine level of awareness of increased police presence in the community	Example may be annual survey questions such as "Are the police around the neighborhood more than before (baseline date)?" with an ordinal scale for reply.
Task Forces	Changes in reported crime rates in area covered by task force	Data should apply to crimes for which the task force was created to address. Presumably, for most that will be drug crimes, but a violent crime task force would, of course, be measured by changes in violent crime rates.
Target Crime Enforcement	Reported crime rates for target crimes	As with task force data, the crimes examined should be those for which the strategy is developed. Investigators may want to also look at related crimes, where appropriate.
Juvenile Crime Enforcement	Changes in rates of arrests of juveniles	
Parole/Probation Strategies	Changes in rates of parole revocations/actions for Weed and Seed area residents  Changes in the rate of Weed and Seed area residents on probation	A critical element of this is the use of rates, rather than raw numbers, as the number of Weed and Seed residents on parole or probation may vary greatly from year to year.
Public Order Crime Enforcement -and- Improved Public Perceptions of Safety	Community survey question to gauge resident perceptions of disorder in the Weed and Seed area	Example may be annual survey questions such as "How do you rate your neighborhood as a place that is safe and orderly?" with an ordinal scale for reply.
Gang Reduction Strategies -and- Gang Prevention	Change in rates of reported gang-related crimes	Investigator may encounter problems of classification, such as the definition of a gang-related crime (e.g., is it any crime committed by a known gang member or is it any crime with a suspected tie to gang activities?).  If crime data for gang-related crimes are not available, a second recommended measure would be a question in a regular and reliably conducted youth survey asking respondents about their involvement with gangs.

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Activity	Performance Measure	Notes
Weapons Reduction Strategies	Changes in rates of reported weapons crimes	There will likely be wide variation in the manner in which local law enforcement agencies track crimes involving a weapon. Some agencies may track weapon involvement for every incident. In some cases, it may be necessary to rely upon reports of crime that specifically deal with the use/misuse of weapons (such as carrying a concealed weapon, or improper discharge of a firearm).
Police-Community Relationship Building	Community survey question measuring the satisfaction with police-community relations	Example may be annual survey questions such as "How do you rate your satisfaction with the performance of your local police department?" with an ordinal scale for reply.
Crime Watch/Resident Patrol	Number of incidents reported by crime watch/resident patrols and number of patrols by groups	These strategies almost demand a two-part measure that can reflect both the growth (or lack thereof) in patrols and their ability to recognize and report criminal activity.
Academic Enrichment	Increased grades among program participants	<p>Due to privacy concerns, local schools will be hesitant, at best, to provide grade information for program participants. The most effective method of getting grade information is usually by having participants' parents agree to provide information from report cards.</p> <p>Local schools should be able to provide cumulative grade information as a point of comparison.</p>
Employability/Job Training -and- Job Placement Strategies	Change in unemployment rate within the Weed and Seed area or the number of program participants employed at given points or for given periods of time after program completion.	The measure chosen will depend on the number of residents served and whether the intervention is general or specific. These programs are normally assessed with process measures (such as graduation rates or participation numbers).
Mentoring	Change in the rate of arrests of program-involved youth	<p>Investigator will want to have an appropriate point of comparison and will need to find a group that matches as closely as possible the group entering the mentoring program. For example, if the mentoring program limits itself to at-risk youth, the comparison group should be similarly at risk youth.</p> <p>Also of interest will be the degree of involvement in the program. Does a greater degree of participation forecast probabilities of success?</p>

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Activity	Performance Measure	Notes
Juvenile Justice Programs	Change in rate of arrests of program-involved youth	Primary prevention programs should use the overall rate of arrest among youths in the Weed and Seed area.
Health-Related Strategies	Changes in emergency room admissions and changes in use of preventative care facilities	Specific programs may have varying degrees of emphasis on preventative care. Youth-focused efforts may also look to obtain school absenteeism data for participants or for the entire school as appropriate for program focus.
Resource Directory	Change in the number of inquires and service requests received by providers listed in the resource directory	While all local providers are likely to be listed in the directory, limiting the potential for a comparison group of providers not listed, it would be possible to request the same information from providers outside the Weed and Seed area not included in the contact directory. These providers could then serve as a comparison group.
Truancy Programs	Changes in local school absenteeism rates for participating youth	<p>As with earlier measures, the scope of youth for whom absenteeism rates should be examined will depend on the scope of the truancy programs. Any community-wide general programs should examine truancy for an entire affected school or schools. Programs that focus on specific populations could be confined to participating youth.</p> <p>In the first case, comparisons with trends in schools not in the target area would be appropriate. In the latter case, comparison groups based on factors related to admission into the program would be appropriate.</p>

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Activity	Performance Measure	Notes
Reentry Initiatives	Changes in recidivism rates over a specified time period	<p>Any examination of recidivism requires a number of decisions to be made before data collection. Among these are the time period to be considered. Given the limited timeframe of the federal Weed and Seed funding cycle, a period of two years following reentry would be reasonable (assuming this allows for completion of the program and a reasonable post-treatment period).</p> <p>Other issues are whether to consider arrest or conviction as a marker of recidivism (arrest may be a high standard, especially if police look for 'the usual suspects,' conviction may require a longer time frame for comparison to allow for resolution of cases). Also, a decision about the seriousness of contact with criminal justice authorities should be made; is any arrest or conviction a marker for recidivism? Or only if a felony is involved? This will depend in part on the pool of those being studied.</p>
GED/School Completion	Changes in the proportion of community residents that are not high school graduates or GED recipients	<p>As with earlier measures, the scope of population for whom GED/school completion should be examined will depend on the scope of the program. Any general programs should examine rates for an entire affected area while those focusing on specific populations could be confined to participants.</p> <p>As with job training programs, resource intensive GED/school completion programs may want to examine cost versus benefit</p>
Community Space Restoration -and- Building Demolition	Changes in the numbers of reported crimes at specific locations	As the purpose of these efforts is often to remove magnets for offending, changes under this program should make specific places less prone to crime. Investigators with access to GIS analytical systems may also want to examine changes in the number of crimes in a surrounding buffer zone as well.

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Activity	Performance Measure	Notes
Housing Improvement/ Rehabilitation -and- New Home Development	Changes in the proportion of owner occupied dwellings within the Weed and Seed target area	By building new homes and improving homes in the area, these strategies encourage long-term residency that will increase the stake of residents in the long-term health of the community. Improved housing stock that is used for rentals is less likely to have the ameliorative effect on crime sought under such programs.
Home Ownership	Increase in the proportion of owner-occupied housing units in Weed and Seed area.	Because Weed and Seed is geographically based, the emphasis will be on seeing a change within the Weed and Seed site. While other programs may show success in program participants buying homes in any part of a jurisdiction, Weed and Seed-related efforts should examine changes within the Weed and Seed area boundaries.
Small Business Development	Increase in the number of small businesses in the target area	A Weed and Seed site of limited size may be able to collect this and other information (such as the number of empty commercial buildings) by completing a physical survey of the Weed and Seed area; actually traveling the streets and noting visible facilities/lots, etc. An alternate source of data is the number of businesses paying taxes within the area or changes in business tax revenue.
Loan Programs	Change in number of business financed through loan programs	In addition to the number of businesses funded, there are other measures that may shed light on the efficacy of such programs. Included among these are the rates of loans paid back and the number of jobs created by businesses funded through the program.

Several of the recommended performance measures involve community or resident surveys. Such surveys pose challenges to Weed and Seed sites that are generally pursuing evaluative efforts under tight financial constraints. The quality of data collection, however, is critical in any survey. Some reminders for data collection that will yield useful and reliable data are:<sup>2</sup>

- Insure the reliability of any surveys by doing a random sample of residents that represent all sectors of the community. Do not just survey people who come to Weed and Seed meetings, for example. If there is a substantial non-English speaking population, the surveys should be translated into the relevant languages or dialects, reviewed for cultural appropriateness for the intended subjects, and the surveyors should be prepared to

<sup>2</sup> Additional pointers from the American Association for Public Opinion Research can be found here: [http://www.aapor.org/pdfs/best\\_pra.pdf](http://www.aapor.org/pdfs/best_pra.pdf)

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communicate with these groups. In these instances, the cooperation of some individuals may be improved by also obtaining the support of key leaders in the community. If you only conduct surveys in the day, you are likely to miss a lot of residents who are at work; likewise, if you do it at night, you will miss residents who work at night.

- The survey data collection method chosen (i.e., phone, mail, or in-person interviews) may skew the results by affecting likely respondents, but may have cost tradeoffs. Phone surveys tend to undercount the young (who use cell phones instead) and the poor (who do not have phones at as high a rate) and the mobile (for whom phone records are more likely to be out of date) and so may be ill suited for Weed and Seed areas. In-person interviews may avoid this but will be much more expensive to conduct and may have other limitations for accuracy. Sometimes a combination of methods provides a balance between reliability and cost concerns. Surveyors should be trained so they are consistent in the delivery of the instrument and do not 'hint' at specific answers (a survey of opinions on law enforcement, for example, will be much different if collected by uniformed law enforcement officers).
- Given standards for numbers of surveys needed, methods for assuring random sampling, and proper instrument design, expert assistance in designing such a process is highly desirable.
- Because there can be substantial time lags between when changes in public services such as local policing practices or community conditions like affordable housing availability are implemented and a widespread awareness of these efforts among residents is achieved, a survey should only be adopted as a performance measure when there is sufficient time for this information to diffuse throughout the area. Residents' perceptions may be longstanding opinions that will require substantial and sustained counterevidence before significant change is reflected in survey results.
- Also relative levels of resident satisfaction as expressed in surveys may be filtered through different expectations for services or community change, e.g., is a neighborhood considered safer when crime is reduced or only when crime is totally eliminated?

Though surveys can be time consuming and expensive, there are few sources that can provide as useful and accurate information for some questions as a properly conducted survey.

Other sources and types of data have their own limitations on how they should be used or viewed. In analyzing crime data, for instance, one should remember that the data generally reflect incidents reported to police, and that the majority of all crimes are never reported. Certain tactics (e.g., community policing, intensive law enforcement) have been found to change the rate of crime reporting, so even if crime is going down, in the short term the number of reported crimes may rise. Given differences in local laws, the same event may be reported as different offenses (or not be an offense in extreme cases) in different jurisdictions. Try to understand the limitations of your data and how they can affect your analysis.

## Revised Homicide Data Analysis Using Expanded CCDO Administrative Data Set

As part of this project's tasks, CCDO and JRSA conducted a detailed review of the administrative records for local sites including Official Recognition (OR) notifications, grant awards and progress reports with the goal of obtaining detailed and accurate information regarding the key dates for the implementation of local Weed and Seed sites' activities. Because these dates are not part of the GPRA information processed by JRSA for CCDO, it has been sporadically obtained at various times in the past. Consequently, this has meant that for various reasons these dates were missing for some sites, which prevented their inclusion in analyses using site implementation dates.

With more complete and accurate Weed and Seed site start date information, it would be possible to determine the time periods between when sites receive OR status, obtain their first Weed and Seed grant awards, and commence activities. The Weed and Seed homicide and crime trend reports could be substantially improved because it would expand the number of site records available for any analysis efforts, which would result in more definitive pre/post periods for comparison of crime and programmatic statistics. While limited pre/post Weed and Seed site analyses has been conducted in the past, it was hoped that hundreds rather than a score of sites could be more rigorously studied.

To date, the most extensive Weed and Seed impact assessment is a draft 2005 GPRA Weed and Seed homicide data study that has information regarding 435 individual Weed and Seed sites. The draft 2005 GPRA Weed and Seed homicide study is an update of a report entitled, *A Comparison of Homicide Trends in Local Weed and Seed Sites Relative to their Host Jurisdictions*, which was published in 2003. The homicide data file that was developed for the draft 2005 GPRA Weed and Seed homicide study was used for these analyses because it includes information for about 100 additional sites and has more recent homicide data than the published 2003 report.

Of these 435 sites, 274 sites have sufficiently complete and accurate historical data for producing time series comparisons of homicides within Weed and Seed sites and their host jurisdictions. There are two main reasons for the drop-off in the number of sites available for analysis. First, many of the sites were so new (110) that they were either in their initial years of operation or they have only a single year (sometimes only a part of a year) of operations. Second, some sites (51) had seriously flawed GPRA homicide reports that could have been due to a wide range of reasons that rendered them invalid for inclusion in this study.

The methodology for the draft 2005 GPRA Weed and Seed homicide data study was simply an examination of the following questions:

- Have homicides decreased in the Weed and Seed sites over time?

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- And, how does the change in homicides in the Weed and Seed sites compare to the homicide statistics for the remainder of their host jurisdictions?

That analysis found the number of homicides had decreased in 56% of the Weed and Seed sites, remained stable in 19%, and increased at a lower rate than the host jurisdiction in 5% of the sites. In only 21% of the Weed and Seed sites had homicides increased.

The draft 2005 GPRA Weed and Seed homicide data study examined the trend in homicides without knowing precisely when the Weed and Seed operations actually began; therefore it is impossible to conduct a pre/post comparison examining the timing associated with Weed and Seed implementation. The following assessment combines the homicide time series data from the 274 sites included in the draft 2005 GPRA Weed and Seed homicide data study with the expanded Weed and Seed start date information found in the CCDO administrative records. It was anticipated that there would be a strong likelihood of matches between these two data sets and that it would provide a more effective test of the hypothesis that following the implementation of a Weed and Seed strategy, homicides should decrease.

In 2004, JRSA did perform a four-year homicide data comparison using the OR award and first grant award date information that was available to it at that time. In this first effort to capture Weed and Seed “start dates”, significant data collection issues were encountered. Consequently, the 2004 pre/post implementation homicide crime analysis was based on data for only 54 Weed and Seed sites. For these sites, a 30% reduction in homicides occurred three years after implementation of their Weed and Seed strategies. One of this project’s objectives was to further expand the number of useable site records for studying Weed and Seed’s effects on community crime levels.

### **Local Site Strategy Implementation and Other Key Event Dates**

Key strategy implementation dates collected for the 2005 expanded CCDO administrative records data set include the Official Recognition date, date of the first Weed and Seed grant award, and the site “start date”.

**Official Recognition** status refers to the extensive planning proposal that is submitted for review before a jurisdiction can be invited to submit a Weed and Seed grant proposal.

The **first award date** is the date CCDO gives to a site’s first approved grant proposal.

The “**start date**” is the day that a Weed and Seed site reports actually beginning Weed and Seed activity.

Of these three initial Weed and Seed strategy implementation dates, the OR date and the actual activity start date reported by the local sites were considered the two most important dates for this analysis.

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In addition to these three key strategy implementation dates, other important administrative information regarding the Weed and Seed sites was collected. For instance, whether or not the grant application was initially accepted or denied is recorded. Often when the initial grant is denied, the site will have a delayed start. Whether or not a denied site eventually does begin operations can be verified by confirming if the site has ever provided first and subsequent years' progress reports. A site with a denied first grant and no subsequent progress reports was judged as not ever starting. The lack of GPRA reporting for these sites provides additional verification that these sites never really began operations.

The availability of the expanded CCDO administrative records for 321 sites raised the possibility that there could be significant overlap with the 274 sites that have valid homicide data sets and were used in the draft 2005 GPRA Weed and Seed homicide data study. This would allow a more authoritative analysis using the various strategy implementation dates. In the end, it was possible to link the expanded CCDO administrative records with 100 sites in the draft 2005 GPRA Weed and Seed homicide data study, which was nearly a doubling of the number of sites for the previous pre/post analysis. The details regarding the record linking process and reasons that information for many local sites could not be linked can be found later in this report in Appendix C - Summary of CCDO Administrative Findings.

### ***Official Recognition Versus The Site Reported "Start" Date: Which is the Real Beginning for Strategy Implementation?***

As previously stated, for a community to receive the federal Weed and Seed designation or OR status, it has to pass an extensive pre-screening process. This requires the submission and approval of an OR plan that is reviewed by CCDO. The review process has multiple criteria, which require the interested jurisdictions to describe their plans and organizational structure for implementing a Weed and Seed strategy that complies with the national model. A failing score on any of the major criteria can result in not being invited to submit an application for funding.

The process of creating an OR plan requires substantial interagency cooperation and organizational development which lead some to believe that achieving this by itself should be viewed as the date that the Weed and Seed strategy actually begins. Others argue that while the OR process is an important initial stage in creating a Weed and Seed site, most sites' strategies are not meaningfully implemented until federal funding and CCDO support are guaranteed and the site staff are hired and working.

At first glance, there appears to be some validity to the question as to whether the OR date or the "start date" for Weed and Seed sites is the most appropriate measure indicating the beginning of Weed and Seed. For instance, there is an average period of 270 days between the OR date and the actual program start date. However, of the 100 Weed and Seed sites where the CCDO administrative records and the 2005 GPRA Weed and Seed homicide study data sets overlap, the records for 40 (while having an OR date) do not have a start date.

Moreover, in 52 of the 60 other sites, the OR and start dates actually occur within the same calendar year. Since homicide statistics are reported annually, this means that in the vast

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majority of cases, the OR and start dates for Weed and Seed homicide analysis are not substantially different for the purpose of measuring the effects of strategy implementation.

Of the eight cases, in which the OR and start date are not in the same calendar year, the OR versus start date analysis becomes moot for three, because when the OR date is used as the initiation point for a Weed and Seed site, it coincides with the first year of homicide reporting—thus there is no baseline history—and therefore no “pre” time period for the pre/post analysis. In the remaining five cases, in which the OR precedes the start date by at least one calendar year, the comparative results are only substantially different in one case.

Finally, while there is generally about a nine-month lag between the OR and the Weed and Seed start dates, this amount of time is not long enough to create a significant difference for the annual Weed and Seed homicide statistics. Therefore, in the remainder of this report, where the Weed and Seed start date is available, it is used as the pre/post demarcation. Where the actual start date is missing from the CCDO administrative records, which includes 40% of cases in the final analysis, the OR date is used as a surrogate start date with the assumption that if the actual start date was known, it would not be significantly different from the OR date.

### *Pre/Post Strategy Implementation Analysis Using 2005 Weed and Seed Homicide Data Set*

In an effort to maximize the number of Weed and Seed sites in the pre/post analysis, both the official recognition and start dates were considered as possible “start dates.” This method of measurement is used because, as shown above, the analytical difference between the two is minimal.

Using this type of measurement for Weed and Seed start dates, there were 100 sites with a match between the expanded CCDO administrative date data set and the draft 2005 GPRA homicide data set. This means that the pre/post analysis includes only 37% (100 out of 271) of the GPRA homicide database’s sites. The majority of these matched sites (60 percent) have both a start date and an OR date. For the remaining 40 percent of the sites only the OR dates were used. This degree of matching with CCDO’s administrative records, while less than ideal, still results in an improved data set for “exploratory” pre/post analysis.

Further attrition in the number of matched Weed and Seed sites occurred because some of the CCDO start dates are not the original site start dates – but appear to be start dates for an interim award or grant revision that took place after the actual site start date. When the full draft 2005 GPRA homicide database was compared to the CCDO “known” start or official recognition date, it was clear that GPRA forms were far more complete and included more historical reporting than the CCDO start date database. Sites where CCDO start dates seem to be an interim date instead of the actual start date were removed from the analysis. Increasing the number of “valid” sites in for future pre/post analyses would involve further searches of CCDO’s files to identify the actual site start dates and may require reviewing archived records for some of the pre-1999 local sites.

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The first step taken in the CCDO start date analysis was to pick the start year for each site's strategy implementation. This same start year was also used for homicides reported in the remainder of the host jurisdiction.

Because of the variability of homicide statistics for a single year, the average number of homicides was calculated for the pre/post periods for each Weed and Seed site and each host jurisdiction. Because of the high percentage of mismatches between the CCDO administrative records and the GPRC homicide data, most of the jurisdictions with multiple active Weed and Seed Sites were reduced to only one site where a start date was known, thus minimizing the validity of the "jurisdictional" analysis used in the draft 2005 GPRC homicide report. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for jurisdictions with multiple Weed and Seed sites to have different start dates for each of the sites. Therefore, in this analysis the multiple sites are treated separately, each with its own unique start date without consideration of the impact of other active Weed and Seed sites within the host jurisdiction.

The first analysis involved a comparison of the average number of homicides per site prior to the start date compared to the average number of homicides following the start date.

### **Findings: Analysis of Pre/Post Weed and Seed Strategy Implementation Changes in Homicides**

For the 100 sites where the draft 2005 GPRC homicide database could be matched to the expanded CCDO administrative records "start date" database, the average number of homicides prior to Weed and Seed was 4.93. Following the implementation of Weed and Seed in these sites, the average number of homicides decreased to 3.57 – an average decrease of 1.4 homicides per site – representing a 28% decrease in homicides.

This may appear to be very small until the change in homicides in the remainder of the host jurisdictions is considered. In the rest of the host jurisdictions, which have much larger populations and volume of homicides than the Weed and Seed sites, there was also a decrease in the number of homicides after the implementation of Weed and Seed. The average decrease in the remainder of the host jurisdictions was, however, only .5 homicides. The decrease in homicides within Weed and Seed sites is three times that which occurred in the remainder of the host jurisdictions. In other words, the pre/post analysis shows that there was a significant decrease in homicides following the implementation of Weed and Seed in the sites (even when combining the very successful and the unsuccessful sites). During this same time period, there was very little change in the host jurisdictions' homicide rates.

### ***Comparing the Pre/Post Strategy Implementation Analysis Results to the Draft 2005 Weed and Seed Homicide Data Analysis***

The pre/post analysis for the 100 sites, for which the draft 2005 GPRC homicide database and expanded CCDO administrative records database can be matched, provides a more valid analysis of Operation Weed and Seed. While this method provides promising results, it is still limited by

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the number of cases (about one-third of sites with data available). The pre/post analysis for the 100 sites also does not consider the sites' performance relative to comparable trends for their host jurisdictions. These limitations raise the question as to whether the simpler analysis used for the GPRA homicides studies, which cover 274 sites, might still be of value.

To help address this question, a more detailed review of the similarities and differences of the pre/post strategy implementation analysis and the draft 2005 GPRA homicide data study was undertaken. The bridge between the two analysis methods is the Weed and Seed Homicide Relative Change Scale. The results from both the pre/post strategy implementation analysis and the draft 2005 Weed and Seed homicide data analysis can be translated into scores using the Homicide Relative Change Scale. This analytic approach and the differences in the finding are discussed below.

### **The Homicide Relative Change Scale**

Because the sites' target areas were selected due to their persistent and severe crime problems, it is reasonable to assess their performance as a function of change relative to the surrounding jurisdictions. This alternative approach adopts the viewpoint that, given this history, these communities would be expected to have crime trends equal or worse than their jurisdiction without the implementation of a Weed and Seed strategy. This was the method used for the draft 2005 GPRA Weed and Seed homicide report. The pre/post average number of homicides for sites and the remainder of the host jurisdiction can easily be translated to the Homicide Relative Change Scale used in the draft 2005 GPRA homicide report. It is just a matter of switching from a linear measure (i.e., employing an arithmetic average) to a ranked order score as was used for the draft 2005 GPRA homicide data study.

The Weed and Seed Homicide Relative Change Scale assesses homicide trends for local sites in relation to similar changes occurring in their host jurisdiction. The Relative Change Scale ranks all of the possible combinations of changes in both the sites and the jurisdictions according to the degree of success for a site. The most successful category or ranking are those local sites that have experienced substantial decreases in homicides while their host jurisdictions have had increasing homicide trends. The least successful category or ranking is when homicides increased in the Weed and Seed site but decreased in the remainder of the host jurisdiction. The different combinations of homicides decreasing, increasing or remaining stable results in a 13-step scale from the most successful to the least and is represented numerically from a +7 to a -5.

For example, in the draft 2005 GPRA Weed and Seed homicide data study, if the number of homicides in a Weed and Seed site data series decreased by five homicides and the remainder of the jurisdiction only declined by three homicides during the same time period, the site would be represented as a site where its decrease in homicides was greater than the decrease in homicides in the remainder of the host jurisdiction – and would be scored as a + 6.

Translating the pre/post average number of homicides for the same site and host jurisdiction was done in the following manner. The average number of homicides in the Weed and Seed site preceding strategy implementation was 12 and for the post-implementation period, the average

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was 5. Therefore, the average number of homicides decreased by 7 after the implementation of Weed and Seed. At the same time, the number of homicides in the remainder of the jurisdiction decreased from an average of 75 prior to Weed and Seed implementation to 70 for the time period afterwards. This means that homicides only decreased by 5 in the remainder of the host jurisdiction and so this would be classified as a site where homicides decreased more in the Weed and Seed site than in the remainder of the jurisdiction – and would also be scored as a +6.

### Weed and Seed Homicide Relative Change Scale

- 7 Site Decreases & Jurisdiction Increases
- 6 Site Decreases > Jurisdiction Decreases
- 5 Site Decreases = Jurisdiction Decreases
- 4 Site Decreases < Jurisdiction Decreases
- 3 Site Decreases & Jurisdiction Stable
- 2 Site Stable & Jurisdiction Increases
- 1 Site Stable & Jurisdiction Stable
- 0 Site Stable & Jurisdiction Decrease
- 1 Site Increases < Jurisdiction Increase
- 2 Site Increases & Jurisdiction Stable
- 3 Site Increases = Jurisdiction Increases
- 4 Site Increases > Jurisdiction Increases
- 5 Site Increases & Jurisdiction Decreases

### **Findings: Comparison Between the Pre/Post Analysis Results and the Draft 2005 Weed and Seed Homicide Analysis Using the Relative Change Scale**

How do the average relative change scores for the pre/post analysis data set compare to the draft 2005 GPRA homicide study results? Applying the Homicide Relative Change Scale to the 100 sites used in the pre/post strategy implementation analysis, the average score was +2.0. This was just a little bit less than the result of +2.15 for the draft 2005 homicide data analysis.

While the difference between the two techniques does not change the direction or the magnitude of success, it is very important to note that the more accurate results from the pre/post strategy implementation data set differ significantly from the Relative Change cores from the 2005 GPRA homicide report in 28 cases (28%). Interestingly, 14 of the 100 sites switch from a positive to a negative Relative Change Scale score – when compared to the original GPRA homicide study. On the other hand, the number of CCDO sites that changed from a negative to positive score also number 14. Therefore, it is to some degree serendipity that the pre/post average relative change scores are so similar to the draft 2005 homicide study results. However, the most important thing is that despite the methodological differences and issues, the Weed and Seed homicide studies both indicate strong positive outcomes for the Weed and Seed strategy.

The following summary of findings indicates how the pre/post strategy implementation data set differs from the larger draft 2005 homicide analysis data set. As noted above, while the results for the two data sets are very similar, the distribution across the possible range of scores varies. The results from the pre/post strategy implementation data set tend to push sites to the extremes,

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when compared to the draft 2005 homicide study data set. In other words, for the pre/post strategy implementation data set, there are more very successful sites (23% versus 16%) and very unsuccessful site (24% versus 13%: using -4 and -5).

Distribution of Sites by Relative Change Scores:  
Comparing the Draft 2005 Homicide Data Study Data Set  
To the Pre/Post Strategy Implementation Analysis Data Set

2005 Homicide Data Study		Pre/Post Analysis
16%	7 Site Decreases & Jurisdiction Increases	23%
9%	6 Site Decreases > Jurisdiction Decreases	7%
3%	5 Site Decreases = Jurisdiction Decreases	3%
22%	4 Site Decreases < Jurisdiction Decreases	27%
4%	3 Site Decreases & Jurisdiction Stable	2%
5%	2 Site Stable & Jurisdiction Increases	3%
3%	1 Site Stable & Jurisdiction Stable	0%
8%	0 Site Stable & Jurisdiction Decrease	3%
11%	-1 Site Increases < Jurisdiction Increase	3%
1%	-2 Site Increases & Jurisdiction Stable	1%
4%	-3 Site Increases = Jurisdiction Increases	4%
5%	-4 Site Increases > Jurisdiction Increases	14%
8%	-5 Site Increases & Jurisdiction Decreases	10%

The pre/post strategy implementation data set provides a more precise measure for assessing the success of the Weed and Seed strategy across sites. This approach's main shortcoming is that the results are limited to about only a third of the sites for which valid homicide data are available because of incomplete site start date records. While the site/host jurisdiction homicide trend comparison results may not be as precise as the pre/post strategy implementation analysis, they provide useful information for almost three times as many sites. Until more complete administrative information is available for site start dates, a combination of both methods to track and assess the performance of local sites can provide a more comprehensive picture of the National Weed and Seed Initiative.



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## Appendix B: Program/Service Classification Guide

Program/Service Name/Type	Category
<b>Law Enforcement</b>	
SRO (School Resource Officer)	Juvenile Crime Enforcement
GREAT	Gang Crime Reduction Strategies
Littering	Public Order Crime Enforcement
Loitering	
Noise	
Nuisance abatement/crime enforcement	
Trespassing	
<b>Community Policing</b>	
Crime prevention techniques	Community Education
Human/individual rights	
Available community/social services	Community Awareness
What the department is doing in the community	
<b>Prevention/Intervention/Treatment</b>	
Cultural programs	Arts/Enrichment
Homework help	
Tutoring	
Centralized service location	Community/Social Service Access
Community service centers	
Transportation to/from services	
Domestic violence counseling	Domestic Violence Prevention/Intervention
Domestic violence prevention	
DEFY – Drug Education for Youth	Drug/Alcohol Education/Prevention
Health education/information	Health Programs
Sex education	
Aftercare	Juvenile Justice Programs
At-risk youth programs	
Youth council/court	
Youth offender programs	
Budgeting	Life Skills/Family Programs
Counseling	
Leadership	
Parenting	
Distribute list of services/where to get	Resource directory
Database of available services	
<b>Neighborhood Restoration</b>	
Beautification	Community Space Restoration
Clean-ups	
Creating community gardens	
Murals	
Cleaning up vacant lots/public places	
Building improvement/restoration	Public Infrastructure Restoration/Improvement
Improving public transportation system	
Improving/creating sidewalks & roads	
Lighting	

## APPENDIX C: Summary of Expanded CCDO Administrative Records Data Set Findings

This CCDO/JRSA effort resulted in a more complete documentation of 321 separate Weed and Seed sites. One site was duplicated (site 435 Athens GA) which reduced the count from 320. In contrast, the GPRA homicide database has 274 sites that have sufficiently complete and accurate historical data that are used for a “crime change” analysis. These data are used to assess the change in homicide patterns in Weed and Seed sites, which are then compared to the change in homicides for the sites’ host jurisdictions. In addition, the GPRA homicide database has partial information for an additional 160 sites for a total of 434 sites. Of these, 51 sites have extensive historical site data, but that information is unreliable with inexplicable differences across the annual GPRA reports. The other 109 Weed and Seed sites are so new that they have little actual Weed and Seed activity (none to one year) with which to justify a change analysis of their homicide data.

It was hoped that there would be a significant overlap between the 320 sites with information regarding implementation start dates for Weed and Seed sites and the 274 sites with complete, multi-year homicide data. The first review of the CCDO start date database showed that:

317 out of 320 sites (99%) had an Official Recognition date, and  
221 out of 320 sites (69%) had a first grant award and site activity start dates.

3 out of 320 (1%) did not have an Official Recognition date. These were Site ID No. 471 - Minneapolis MN, Site ID No. 057 - Des Moines IA, and Site ID No. 473 - St. Paul MN.

### First Award Dates and Start Dates

The relationship between first grant award dates and the site activity start dates is complex. On average, the reported site activity start date for Weed and Seed sites occurs 88 days before the first award date. But this average is somewhat misleading because some sites activity “starts” before the first award date and some start after.

Of the 221 sites with both first award and start dates before the first award, 167 (76%) start before the first award day, on average 125 days before the first award. This means that about three-fourths of the sites actually begin their local Weed and Seed activity prior to, in anticipation of the receipt of their first grant award.

Of the 221 sites with both first award and start dates, 54 (24%) start after the first award day, the average delay between the first award date and the site start date is 30 days.

### Official Recognition versus the Start Dates

There are 219 sites out of 320 (69%) with Official Recognition dates and start dates and first award dates.

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For these 219 sites, the Official Recognition dates precede the start dates by an average of 270 days.

Also for these 219 sites, the Official Recognition dates precede the first award dates by an average of 359 days.

Actually as described above, the relationships between Official Recognition dates and either the start date and the first award date can go to another level of definition where the Official Recognition dates are compared to those sites where the first award dates precede the site start date and visa versa.

Chronology of Sites with Official Recognition (OR) But Missing Start Dates

There are 98 sites with Official Recognition dates but are missing both the first grant award and the site activity start dates. It would be natural to expect that the missing dates would be heavily weighted to the older sites. While there is a significant number of missing start dates for older sites, the table below shows that the missing information is by no means limited to these old sites

<u>OR Year</u>	<u>Number of Missing Start Dates</u>
1998	1
1999	17
2000	25
2001	10
2002	8
2003	7
2004	9
2005	21

MATCHING CCDO OR AND START DATES AND GPRA 2005 HOMICIDE DATA

Out of the 320 CCDO sites, 284 (89%) can be matched to the 2005 homicide analysis database which has 434 sites going back to 1996. However, the 2005 homicide database has data quality limitations that result in only 274 sites being analyzed as to their level of success at reducing homicides within the Weed and Seed sites. These 274 sites have GPRA homicide reports that have reliable reporting over the years.

There also 51 sites in the 2005 homicide database, while having multi-year information, are not included in the homicide analysis because are large differences across the GPRA's submitted for these sites that cannot be easily reconciled.

There are another 63 sites in the GPRA 2005 homicide database that have 3 years of history and either a single year or a partial year of Weed and Seed site activity and are not yet included in the homicide change analysis.

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Finally, there 43 new sites that have only historical homicide data being reported as part of the 2005 homicide database and cannot be used as part of the homicide change analysis.

The following table indicates how well the GPRA homicide database and the CCDO official recognition and site start data match for each of the GPRA homicide database groups.

Matching GPRA Homicide Weed and Seed Sites  
And CCDO OR and Start Dates

Category of GPRA 2005 Homicide Data	GPRA Sites	CCDO OR Sites	CCDO Start Date Sites
Valid Data	274	147 (54%)	97 (35%)
Questionable Data	51	30 (59%)	25 (49%)
New Sites: Only 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	63	56 (89%)	48 (76%)
New Sites: History Only	46	43 (93%)	37 (80%)

As discussed earlier in the CCDO start date database, there are many more records with only Official Recognition dates than those with both Official Recognition and start dates. This situation limits the ability to match these records to the GPRA homicide database. While 54 percent of the sites with OR dates match to the GPRA homicide database's records with complete and valid data; only 35 percent with both dates overlap. While there may be some expectation that older sites may be more difficult to match, it is probably even more disconcerting that the overlap between the newest Weed and Seed sites (i.e., those initiated within the past two years) and the GPRA homicide database is lower than expected. These new sites are still missing 20 to 24 percent of the start dates. This may be due to the carryover of funding for these sites to the next fiscal year.

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