



# Crime SOLUTIONS

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# A Review of Law Enforcement Programs in CrimeSolutions.gov

Edward R. Maguire, Ph.D.

American University

maguire@american.edu

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## Law Enforcement Programs

### 5 Effective Programs

- Checkpoint Tennessee
- DNA Field Experiment
- Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS)
- Minneapolis Preventive Patrol
- Operation Peacekeeper

### 12 Promising Programs

- Charlotte–Mecklenberg PD DV Reduction Unit
  - Compstat (Fort Worth, Texas)
  - Dallas Anti-Gang Initiative
  - Operation Ceasefire: Hollenbeck Initiative
  - Indianapolis Directed Patrol
  - Indianapolis Violence Reduction Partnership (IVRP)
  - Kansas City PD Street Narcotics Unit
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# Law Enforcement Programs (cont'd)

## 12 Promising Programs (cont'd)

- Nashville Drug Market Intervention
- Operation Safe Streets (Philadelphia, Pa.)
- Phoenix Repeat Offender Program
- Safer Cities Initiative
- Targeted Gun Law Messaging

## 1 Null Program

- Portland Police Bureau Domestic Violence Reduction Unit



# Themes From Effective Law Enforcement Programs

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## DNA Evidence

Evidence from a large, federally funded study of five agencies shows that gathering DNA evidence from burglary locations results in more suspects identified, arrested, and successfully prosecuted.

Caution: Another study suggests that DNA is used rarely by criminal investigators.

One study took place under demonstration conditions, and the other under natural conditions.

### Implications:

We need studies of DNA use in criminal investigations under a variety of conditions.

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## Ballistic Evidence

Evidence from Boston, Mass., shows that automated ballistic imaging results in more “cold hits” or matching of ballistic evidence from different cases.

Thin evidentiary foundation: one study, one agency.

Little is known about the systems and structures by which police agencies investigate gun crime in the United States.

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## Sobriety Checkpoints

Evidence from a highly publicized sobriety checkpoint initiative in Tennessee showed a 20 percent reduction in drunk-driving fatal crashes; 85 percent of survey respondents viewed the program positively.

This finding is consistent with a 2002 review of 10 studies that concluded that sobriety checkpoints reduce crashes, fatalities, and injuries.

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## Police Patrol Presence

Evidence from the Minneapolis Preventive Patrol Experiment shows that intensified police presence in hot spots reduces crime, disorder, and the number of calls to the police.

This study is different from the many experiments that concentrate on *what police do* in hot spots—this study focused on their mere presence.

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## Youth Outreach Workers

Evidence from Stockton's Operation Peacekeeper showed that youth outreach workers who served as mentors and positive role models for youth decreased the number of gun homicides.

The youth outreach workers worked with at-risk youths to help them understand the consequences of violence and the alternatives to gang membership.

Caution: Klein and Maxson (2006, 260) suggest that youth outreach workers must be carefully monitored to avoid "boomerang" effects.

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# Law Enforcement Research Implications

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## Social Science and Criminal Investigations

- Two of the five programs rated as “effective” are forensic evidence processing methods used in criminal investigations. Yet the study of criminal investigation in the United States pales in comparison with the study of police patrol and management practices.
  - We often study technologies using scientific methods, but we rarely study the way people use technologies using social scientific methods.
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## The State of Police Research

Some topics are studied frequently using high-quality research designs and have generated cumulative results:

- Police problem-solving in hot spots
  - Use of arrest in spousal assault
  - Sobriety checkpoints
  - DARE
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## The State of Police Research (cont'd)

- Most topics are studied infrequently or using weak designs. Little is known about these topics.
  - Many programs were rejected from this study because their research designs were not deemed trustworthy.
  - Many of the programs included in this study were rated as “promising” because their designs were not sufficient to rate them “effective.”
  - Weak studies often contribute more smoke than fire to the cumulative research.
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# Law Enforcement Policy Implications

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## A Lesson in Parenthetical Caveats

- Hot spots policing works (as long as sufficient attention is paid to legitimacy concerns).
  - Investment in forensic evidence processing works (though much remains to be learned).
  - Youth outreach workers can reduce violence (if monitored carefully).
  - Sobriety checkpoints work (though many areas do not permit them).
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# Discussion/Q and A