Smart Policing Initiative Proposed Plan

New Haven, CT   October 2011

Problem Statement

Although evidence based approaches are attempted on an individual district level in New Haven, CT, there is no structure or consistency to the applications, nor any criteria to prioritize the focus of resources to address problems. In addition, there is no consistent documentation of activities or outcomes achieved. Furthermore, the city's serious financial constraints have resulted in across the board reductions in department budgets including the police department. With a serious and persistent problem of violent crime, the New Haven Police Department (NHPD) needs to allocate resources carefully, increase partnerships with the community and other law enforcement agencies to leverage resources and engage in effective and proven problem solving efforts at all levels of the organization.

Site Goal(s) and Goal Timeline (short term, long-term goals)

The goal of the NHPD's Smart Policing Initiative is to institutionalize the use of evidence-based problem solving practices throughout the police department using geospatial predictive analysis and threshold analysis to inform the focus of police and community resources.

Primary Project Objectives and Strategies

Through this project the NHPD seeks a means to prioritize the use of police and community resources by identifying abnormal or persistent patterns in crime type by location and directing focused problem solving methods to the specific problems. The site has two major strategies to achieve this objective:

1. Training: The University of New Haven (UNH), the site's research partner, will provide training in crime analysis to all levels of police personnel and will facilitate its use at all ranks. UNH will also provide training in the SARA problem solving model with the goal of increasing use and proficiency in applying these skills in daily operations. Training will also be provided to community, government leaders and law enforcement partners.

2. **Threshold Analysis:** The NHPD will use threshold analysis to identify abnormal frequencies of crime events on a weekly basis and perform in-depth examination of persistent violent crimes in the context of environmental factors using geospatial predictive analysis.

Information from this analysis will assist in directing problem-solving efforts for the entire department. Each week the NHPD Crime Analysis Unit analyze the past four weeks of data on the number of reported crimes occurring in each district to determine (1) police districts with an unusual volume of major crimes, (2) districts within the normal range, and (3) districts with an usually lower than normal volume of crimes.

Partnerships and Collaboration

The University of New Haven is the site's research partner. The site also plans to reach out to the community, including businesses and religious groups (e.g., block clubs), as well as to city agencies, such as Parks and Recreation, Traffic, and other city maintenance/ services.

Potential Challenges and/or Obstacles

1. Organizational challenges

2. Acceptance of the approach by officers

3. Acceptance of the approach by the community

Evaluation/measurement of success (i.e., data collection, data sources, and comparative design)

The site will evaluate implementation of the efforts (process) and outcomes.

1. Process evaluation: This will consist of identifying discrete activities or definable tasks to be undertaken by specific officers.
2. Outcomes evaluation: This will require to two major sources of data:
   a. Systematic documentation of the SARA process engaged in by the department
   b. Data to examine how the developed solutions were implemented

Success will be measured by the number of department members trained, the number and type of evidence-based responses used, the effectiveness of the analytics models, the establishment of written protocols, increases in personnel knowledge and ability to successfully implement problem solving efforts, and evaluating the effectiveness of these targeted efforts in reducing crime.

The site will use a community survey at the beginning of the project to establish community attitudes about police problem solving and one will be undertaken at the end of the project to measure perception changes. A similar survey will be undertaken for police personnel at all ranks.