Implementation and Evaluation

Lessons from Research

Effective Implementation and Ongoing Evaluation

There are five domains of program evaluation:

- What are the goals of the program?
- How is the program meant to work?
- How will the program work in practice?
- How will the program’s impact be measured?
- How will the program’s efficiency be evaluated?

When expanding opportunities for officer discretion related to arrests by providing alternatives such as a warning, citation, or summons in lieu of arrest, and diversion programs, law enforcement agencies should consider:

- Collaborating with appropriate stakeholders to identify community needs and evaluate perceptions of arrest alternatives.
- Identifying a mechanism(s) to document interactions that do not result in an arrest. Tracking these encounters allows for comparison between arrest and non-arrest data, ensures alternatives to arrest are being implemented appropriately, and acknowledges productive officer activity.
- Developing a specific plan for training and supervisory oversight to guide and assess officers’ utilization of arrest alternatives.

- Monitoring and evaluating diversion programs to ensure the targeted population is being reached and anticipated benefits are achieved.
- Examining how police-public contacts, to include use of arrest alternatives, affect the workload of officers in the short- and long-term.
- Beginning with the end in mind. Consider the police agency’s ultimate goals and how to measure those goals.
- Establishing specific criteria for when officers should make an arrest or use an alternative.
- Transparency with the public concerning arrest and decision criteria.

Key Takeaways for Police Agencies

- **Arrest and alternatives to arrest are specific tools**, and each should be used under specific circumstances. Police play an important role in making this crucial decision.

- **Emphasize solutions.** Focused police activity such as community policing, hot spots patrol, and proactivity can increase an officer’s effectiveness.

- **Discretion should be provided** that allows law enforcement officers to decide whether an individual should be arrested, provided a warning, issued a citation or summons, or directed to a diversion program.

- **Both arrest and non-arrest encounters between the police and the public should be thoroughly documented.**

- **Agencies should regularly evaluate arrest policies, practices, and diversion programs** to prevent unintended, collateral consequences.

- **Police-academic collaborations should be developed, and evidence-based practices should be applied** to help inform further developments of arrest policies and alternatives to arrest.

- **Sustained community partnerships should be fostered** to enhance the trust and legitimacy gained from adopting arrest alternatives.

This publication is one in a series and is based on a literature review examining the factors associated with arrest and alternatives to arrest. To access the full literature review and more information and resources from the IACP/UC Center for Police Research and Policy, please visit:

- research@theIACP.org
- theIACP.org/research
- 800.THE.IACP

Funded by Arnold Ventures, the IACP/UC Center for Police Research and Policy brings together renowned scholars, current and former police executives, programmatic staff, and dedicated researchers to conduct cutting-edge research and share findings with law enforcement leaders around the world.

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