

## PROBLEM SOLVING PROJECT PROCESS

### **Reference:**

Problem Solving Guide  
Problem Solving Tracking System (PSTS) Database Users Guide

### **Definitions:**

**Community Police Partnering Center (CPPC)** - Utilizes Community Safety Specialists to work in partnership with the police and community to develop and implement effective problem solving strategies and train community members in the SARA methodology.

**Community Problem Oriented Policing (CPOP)** – A philosophy and methodology designed to address community problems through a partnership between City employees and the residents of Cincinnati. A crime reduction and safety approach that involves examining repeat or recurring incidents for the conditions that permit them to occur. It involves seeking out and implementing effective responses, examining the impact these responses have on the problem and subsequently reporting the results in ways that will benefit other police agencies.

**Crime Analysis** – An evidence-based approach to systematically identify, characterize and proactively respond to patterns and trends of criminal activity. This process helps facilitate decision-making and aids in more efficient and effective deployment of resources.

**Crime Analyst** – Employee who assists Department personnel by providing tactical, strategic and administrative analyses to identify crime trends and HAZARD areas to focus resource allocations.

**Incident** – A single service request, for an individual or community concern.

**Project Coordination Unit**– A unit within the Data Integration Section comprised of project coordination officers who help conduct crime analysis, research, collect data, and assist in developing and implementing response plans.

**Neighborhood Liaison Sergeant** – One sergeant in each district designated to coordinate communications and activities with neighborhood groups, assist with community relations functions, and support the District's efforts at community policing and problem solving. The sergeant reports to the district commander and supervises the district's neighborhood liaison officers. They work closely with the Community Oriented Policing (COP) Coordinator.

**Problem** – A recurring set of related harmful crime, disorder, or safety incidents in a community that members of the public expect the police to address.

**Problem Solving** – Identifying and analyzing recurring crime or safety problems, developing and implementing tailored responses based on the analysis, and evaluating the impact of the responses on the problem.

**Problem Solving Tracking System (PSTS)** – The searchable database used to document problem solving projects. The PSTS utilizes a series of “Critical Elements” questions to ensure the SARA problem solving process is followed.

**Project Lieutenant** – A project lieutenant is responsible for developing a plan to address the identified problem-solving project; the plan will include coordination of resources and delegation of tasks. The project lieutenant will be responsible for establishing performance measures, setting timelines/goals, and monitoring the project’s success or be prepared to adjust the plan as necessary.

**Repeat Spreadsheet** – A spreadsheet that tracks the repeat incidents involving the three components of crime: repeat victims, repeat suspects, and repeat locations. The repeat spreadsheet is located on the H: drive and updated monthly by Data Integration Section.

**SARA** – The acronym for the problem solving process.

- **Scanning** – The first stage in the SARA process, involving problem identification, verification, and classification.
- **Analysis** – The second stage in the SARA process, involving systematic examination of the problem to identify possible causes or conditions that might be susceptible to alternative responses.
- **Response** - The third stage in the SARA process, involving the development and implementation of tailored interventions designed to reduce the problem.
- **Assessment** – The fourth stage in the SARA process, involving evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented responses.

**Situational Crime Prevention** – Techniques used with problem oriented policing to reduce or block crime opportunities.

***Purpose:***

To define a Departmental process of identifying and addressing repeat crime and disorder problems and community service requests in an effort to improve the quality of life, safety and security of citizens.

To utilize the problem solving methodology to achieve sustainable reductions in repeat locations, offenders and victims with minimal displacement.

**Policy:**

The Cincinnati Police Department is fully committed to institutionalizing Problem Solving as the principal strategy for addressing crime and disorder. Cooperation between bureaus, districts, sections, units and shifts is required and extremely important to the success of problem solving projects.

The SARA problem solving methodology is the Department's principal strategy for addressing repeat crime and disorder problems. Supervisors at every level of the organization are responsible for institutionalizing the SARA problem solving methodology.

**Information:**

Inter-agency collaboration and stakeholder participation is extremely important to effective problem solving. City employees will work with community members to identify and resolve neighborhood problems. The Community Police Partnering Center (CPPC) is also available as a resource for problems identified by a district/section/unit commander as a possible CPOP initiative. The CPPC can provide a link to community services and other resources. City and CPPC staff work together to provide training and facilitate problem solving.

City staff, community members, and the CPPC may activate the problem solving process when a pattern of incidents is identified. District/section commanders make the final determination to accept a situation as a problem or incident. Problems are handled through the Department's problem solving process. Incidents are handled by strategic deployment of resources.

Participation and success in problem solving is a part of the Performance Evaluation Process for every sworn employee in the Department.

**Procedure:**

- A. Problem Solving Project Ideas Received and/or Generated by Police Personnel
  1. Police personnel will complete a Form 560 for recurring crime or safety problems and submit the completed report through their chain of command to the district/section/unit commander with a recommendation.
  2. Police personnel at every level within the organization are encouraged to identify and submit recommendations for recurring crime or safety problems.
    - a. If the district/section/unit commander determines the issue may generate a viable project, the Form 560 will be routed to the crime analyst for a preliminary analysis and recommendation.
      - 1) The crime analyst will document the preliminary analysis on a Form 560CA.

3. The district/section commander will review the Form 560CA to determine if it is a problem or should be handled by strategic deployment of resources.
    - a. If the district/section commander determines the issue is a problem, the project will be immediately assigned to a project lieutenant.-
    - b. The project lieutenant will contact the department member generating the original idea to advise the disposition of the Form 560.
- B. Problem Solving Project Ideas from Other Sources
1. Problem Solving Project Ideas Generated by Citizens
    - a. Citizens or community groups identifying a potential problem solving project may directly contact the police or complete the comment form provided on the Police Department's web page or the CPOP web page.
    - b. When a citizen or community group directly contacts a Police Department employee with an idea for a problem solving project, the employee will obtain the necessary information to complete a Form 560, CPOP Project Submission Request, and follow the process outlined in Section-A.1.
  2. Problem Solving Project Ideas Generated by the Community Police Partnering Center (CPPC)
    - a. When a CPPC member becomes aware of a problem or develops an idea for a project, they will complete a Form 560 and Form 560CA and electronically send it to the appropriate district Neighborhood Liaison Sergeant.
      - 1) The Form 560CA will include preliminary analysis and supporting information from the CPPC crime analyst.
    - b. The Neighborhood Liaison Sergeant will review the forms and route them to the district/section commander with a recommendation.
    - c. The district/section commander will determine if the issue is a problem or should be handled by strategic deployment of resources.
      - 1) If the district/section commander determines the issue may generate a viable project, he will forward the Forms 560 and 560CA to the crime analyst for further analysis.-
        - a) The crime analyst will review the forms and provide a recommendation to the district/section/unit commander.

b) If approved by the district/section commander, the project will be immediately assigned to a project lieutenant.

2) The Neighborhood Liaison Sergeant will contact the CPPC member to advise the disposition of their submission.

#### C. Problem Solving Project Selection Frequency and Assignment

1. Each operational lieutenant will be assigned a **minimum** of one problem solving project at any point in time. Operational lieutenants include those assigned to Districts, Special Services Section, Central Vice Control Section and Criminal Investigations Section (CIS).
  - a. The resolution of problem solving projects will generally be closed between 90 – 365 days. A project may be extended beyond a year with approval by the respective Bureau Commander.
  - b. Department members at all levels are eligible to participate in the scanning, analysis, and response phases of the problem solving process.
  - c. When a project is successfully closed, the district/section commander and project lieutenant will:
    - 1) Ensure that the person who identified the problem topic is notified of the response, successful outcomes, and problem closure.
    - 2) Meet with the project lieutenant and other key personnel to discuss new project ideas.
    - 3) Within 30 days of a successful closure of a problem solving project, a new problem solving project, identified by the project lieutenant and approved by the district commander, will be entered into PSTS
  - d. District/Section Commanders will ensure projects are reassigned to a new project lieutenant should a change of personnel occur.
    - 1) The new project lieutenant will be updated on the goals and progress of the project by key personnel involved in the project or the original project lieutenant whenever possible.
    - 2) The project reassignment will be documented in the PSTS database.

#### D. Problem Solving Project Implementation and Closure

1. When a project is approved, the crime analyst will document the scanning information on a Form 560 and route the Form 560 and Form 560CA to the Neighborhood Liaison Sergeant.

2. The Neighborhood Liaison Sergeant will:
  - a. Enter the problem into the PSTS database and record the tracking number on the Form 560 and 560CA.
  - b. Make a blotter entry indicating a problem solving project has been approved for the specific address.
  - c. Electronically forward a copy of the approved Form 560 and Form 560CA to the project lieutenant and the Project Coordination Unit.
  - d. The original Form 560 and 560CA will be filed at the district of origin.
3. The crime analyst will conduct additional analysis as needed and recommend a short term and a long term goal to the district/section commander and project lieutenant.
  - a. The analysis and recommendations will be documented on the second page of the Form 560CA.
4. The project lieutenant will begin entering the scanning and preliminary analysis information into the PSTS database.
  - a. The Project Coordination Unit personnel are available for assistance with research, best practices, and to assist in developing responses.
5. The project lieutenant will implement and document in PSTS the response phases of the problem solving projects within 90 days of the approval of the Form 560.
6. The crime analyst will begin the assessment phase of the project based upon the first date a response is implemented. The purpose of the monthly assessments is to determine if the analysis and response(s) are still valid, producing positive results and moving toward meeting the project goal(s).
  - a. If analysis indicates the project has not been effective, the district/section commander and project lieutenant will determine if a new response should be employed.
  - b. If a new response is employed, the monthly assessment process is repeated.
7. Once the district/section commander and project lieutenant determine that the project has met the goals, monthly closure assessments will begin to determine whether the results are sustained.
  - a. If analysis indicates the project has not continued to be effective, the district/section commander and project lieutenant will determine if a new response should be employed.

8. If the project goals continue to be sustained, after 90 days the project will then be closed.
  - a. The project will be closed in the PSTS database with the appropriate closure(s):
    - 1) Closed – Harm Reduced
    - 2) Closed – Incidents Reduced
    - 3) Eliminated Closed – Problem
    - 4) Closed – Problem Handling Improved
    - 5) Closed – Pending Other Organization or Department Action
  
9. District/Section Commanders shall submit a Quarterly Problem Solving Status Report on all open projects, through the chain of command, by February 1, May 1, August 1 and November 1 each year.
  - a. This report shall contain a brief summary of the problem, current SARA stage, analysis and goals, assessment data (if available) and a general statement of the overall progress of the project.
  - b. The status reports will be presented and discussed at bureau meetings to ensure senior command staff are kept informed of department efforts and project outcomes.
  - c. The approved reports will be retained by the COP Coordinator and utilized to meet the standards of CALEA 45.2.2.

#### E. Problem Solving Project Documentation

1. All approved projects will be entered into the PSTS database by the neighborhood liaison sergeant.
2. The PSTS database will generate the SARA problem solving process and automatically assign a unique number to each case, consisting of the district, year and next sequential case number.-
  - a. The PSTS database contains dropdown menus and open fields for inputting narratives.
  - b. When adding information into the database, each of the “Critical Elements” questions must be answered with accurate, detailed information.
3. Updates to projects should be entered into the PSTS database by the Department employee(s) or CPPC member(s) who are involved in the activity being reported.
  - a. Any member of the Department or the CPPC may input information to existing projects.

- b. Edits made to information previously entered into the database should be made by the individual who originally entered the information.

F. Form 562, Community Problem Oriented Policing Resource Request

1. Personnel in need of assistance from another district/section/unit will forward a request on a Form 562, Community Problem Oriented Policing Resource Request, through the chain of command.
2. Personnel who have identified a need for additional funding to assist in solving a CPOP problem will complete a Form 562 and forward it through the chain of command.