12.370 PROBLEM SOLVING PROJECT PROCESS

Reference:
Problem Solving Guide
Problem Solving Tracking System (PSTS) Users Guide in the Records Management System (RMS)

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 to focus resource allocations.

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, safety problems, or quality of life issues, 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 system in RMS used to document problem solving projects. The PSTS utilizes a series of “Critical Elements” questions to ensure the SARA problem solving process is followed.

District Strategy Lieutenant – A district strategy 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 district strategy 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.
The district command structure for the PSTS will be as follows:

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  DISTRICT CAPTAIN
     /\               /
  District Strategy Lieutenant  Relief Lieutenant
       /\            /
 Violent Crimes Squad Sergeant  Investigative Sergeant
       /\                   /
 Neighborhood Liaison Sergeant
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**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.

**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, quality of life, 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 to submit their problem solving project to their district strategy lieutenant.

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 strategy lieutenant determines the issue is a viable project, the Form 560 will be routed to the crime analyst for a preliminary analysis and recommendation.

3. The district/section commander will review the Form 560 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.
   b. The district strategy 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. 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 electronically send it to the appropriate district Neighborhood Liaison Sergeant.

   1) The Form 560 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 strategy lieutenant 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) The Neighborhood Liaison Sergeant will contact the CPPC member to advise the disposition of their submission, upon determination by the commander.

C. Problem Solving Project Implementation and Closure

1. The Neighborhood Liaison Sergeant will:

   a. Enter the problem into the PSTS folder and record the tracking number on the Form 560.

   b. Make a RMS blotter entry indicating a problem solving project has been approved, listing the specific address and the PSTS tracking number.

   c. Attach the Form 560 to the PSTS folder in RMS.

   d. The original Form 560 will be filed at the district of origin in the NLU office.

2. 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 district strategy lieutenant.

3. The district strategy lieutenant or NLU supervisor will begin entering the scanning and preliminary analysis information into the PSTS database.

4. The district strategy lieutenant or NLU supervisor will implement and document in PSTS the response phases of the problem solving projects within 90 days of the approval of the Form 560.

5. 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 district strategy lieutenant will determine if a new response should be employed.

   b. If a new response is employed, the monthly assessment process is repeated.
6. Once the district/section commander and district strategy 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 district strategy lieutenant will determine if a new response should be employed.

7. 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 folder with the appropriate closure(s):
      1) Closed – Harm Reduced
      2) Closed – Incidents Reduced
      3) Closed – Problem Eliminated
      4) Closed – Problem Handling Improved
      5) Closed – Pending Other Organization or Department Action

8. District/Section Commanders shall hold a monthly district-level strategy meeting where the captain, district strategy lieutenant, VCS, investigative, NLU sergeants and district crime analyst regularly discuss crime patterns and trends to determine appropriate responses or initiation of a new CPOP project.

9. District/Section Commanders shall submit a Quarterly Problem Solving Status Report on all open projects by February 1, May 1, August 1 and November 1 each year to the Collaborative Agreement Compliance Unit.
   
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.

D. Problem Solving Project Documentation

1. All approved projects will be entered into the PSTS folder by the district strategy lieutenant or the neighborhood liaison sergeant.

2. The PSTS folder will generate the SARA problem solving process and automatically assign a unique number to each case.
   
a. The PSTS folder contains dropdown menus and open fields for inputting narratives.

b. When adding information into the PSTS folder, all of the “Critical Elements” questions must be answered with accurate, detailed information.
c. Attachments are a critical element of the PSTS project. All must have a file name.

3. Updates to projects should be entered into the PSTS folder by the Department employee(s) or CPPC member(s) who are involved in the project.
   a. Edits made to information previously entered into the PSTS folder should be made by the individual who originally entered the information, or by the district strategy lieutenant only.

E. Additional Reference Material:
   1. If you need assistance or instructions on PSTS in RMS, see one of the following references, available on the CPD INTRANET:
      a. Go to References/Manuals, select “References”
         1) PSTS Quick Reference
         2) PSTS User Guide, with examples / instructions on the four questions under List Results and Changes