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Since 1969 the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) has awarded over \$5 billion to State and local governments to reduce crime and delinquency. An analysis of evaluations of the impact and effectiveness of programs receiving these funds was summarized. Findings/Conclusions: Evaluation activities of LEAA and the States have been inadequate to meet planning, decisionmaking, and policymaking needs of users concerned with the intergovernmental block grant crime control program. For example: the amount and types of evaluation work had not been adequate, and quality of evaluation activities and products was questionable, evaluation information users' needs were not being met, the allocation and management of evaluation resources needed improvement, and better coordination of evaluation program efforts was needed. LEAA should place greater emphasis upon building evaluation into programs and projects before they are started at the Federal, State, and local levels, and exercise greater leadership. Recommendations: The Congress should consider expanding LEAA's research, development, demonstration, and evaluation role, with greater involvement from State and local governments. The Attorney General should direct LEAA to provide for substantive involvement of State and local officials in formulating evaluation policies, guidelines, and requirements. Such efforts should include establishing an evaluation coordinating committee and assessing evaluation information feedback needs of States and localities periodically. The Attorney General should direct the Administrator of LEAA to: provide for the organizational placement of evaluation responsibilities minimally at the Deputy Administrator level and provide for additional resources for evaluation functions; increase the priority emphasis of research and development efforts; develop reliable data bases, evaluation measures, and assessment criteria to determine the impact of programs; stimulate the use of program-level and outcome evaluations; develop and require standardized reporting systems;

standardize quality control; and develop the implement impact evaluation information and reporting systems. The Attorney General should also examine and consider proposing options for changes in legislation. (Author/HTW)

7092

BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL

Report To The Congress

OF THE UNITED STATES

Evaluation Needs Of

- Crime Control Planners,
- Decisionmakers, And
- Policymakers

Are Not Being Met

A Summary

This is a summary
of the full GAO report
issued under report
number GGD-77-72



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JULY 14, 1978



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-171019

To the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives

This is a summary of our report which analyzes efforts by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and the States to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of projects and programs designed to prevent, control, and reduce crime and delinquency and to improve the criminal justice system. Overcoming problems in obtaining objective, valid, and timely evaluation information is vital if planners, decisionmakers, and policymakers are to identify programs and projects that work and merit continuation.

We made this review because of continuing congressional interest in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act Program and the importance of the role of evaluation in fostering improvements in the crime control and criminal justice areas. Our review was made pursuant to the Budget and Accounting Act, 1921 (31 U.S.C. 53), and the Accounting and Auditing Act of 1950 (31 U.S.C. 67).

We are sending copies of this report summary to the Director, Office of Management and Budget, and the Attorney General.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James P. Bevilacqua".

Comptroller General
of the United States

INTRODUCTION

The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) awarded about \$5 billion between fiscal years 1969 and 1978 to State and local governments to prevent and reduce crime and delinquency and/or to improve the criminal justice system. The funds financed the operation of well over 100,000 grants.

What impact have these funds had on crime, delinquency, and the performance of the criminal justice system? Which specific strategies and programs have been effective in reducing, controlling, and preventing crime and delinquency, and which have not?

A cogent, systematic approach to evaluation is necessary to answer the above questions. Persons responsible for planning, decisionmaking, and policymaking functions involving the allocation of funds for reducing crime and delinquency and/or improving the performance of the criminal justice system need objective, valid, and reliable information which identifies and differentiates between those program strategies which are effective and those which are not. The concept of evaluation as employed in the context of our review is defined as:

"A systematic procedure which attempts to appraise and measure the actual inputs, processes, outcomes, and operational settings of one or more on-going programs or policies in order to compare these findings with those which were anticipated or assumed. It then seeks to explain the discovered differences and to suggest alternatives for improvements." 1/

Generation of sufficient and timely evaluation information is vital to identifying what works; how well it works; what effect it has; and, importantly, what does not work and why. Strategies to (1) reduce, control, and prevent crime and juvenile delinquency and/or (2) improve the performance of the criminal justice system must be tested to identify which ones, if any, will lead to the attainment of the national goal of insuring public safety and reducing criminal victimizations.

1/See our publication, "Evaluation and Analysis To Support Decisionmaking," PAD-76-9, Sept. 1, 1976, for a discussion of the analytical continuum subsumed by the term "evaluation."

The Congress, in enacting the Crime Control Act of 1976, expressed its continuing concern for evaluation in declaring that constructive Federal aid and assistance be given to State and local governments in obtaining answers to these questions. Before passing this act, committees of the Congress examined important issues and alternative actions in considering the reauthorization of the Crime Control Act and LEAA. Consequently, the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs requested information on and the results of our examination and analysis of LEAA and State evaluation efforts. The Committee was particularly interested in whether and to what extent our previous recommendations for improving program evaluation activities and information had been implemented.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF REVIEW

We made this review to (1) determine whether LEAA had addressed the evaluation-related recommendations in our previous reports, and (2) assess the extent to which evaluation work and operations of LEAA and the States had improved. Our work was performed in late 1975 and early 1976 at LEAA headquarters, four LEAA regional offices (Philadelphia, Kansas City, San Francisco, and Seattle), and in four States (Pennsylvania, Kansas, California, and Oregon).

In particular we focused on determining:

- Whether LEAA and the States were complying with the intent of the Congress in its provisions for evaluation in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act (hereafter referred to as the Crime Control Act).
- How adequate, sufficient, and timely evaluation efforts and products have been in meeting user's needs.
- To what extent evaluations were used and were useful in State and local planning, decisionmaking, and policymaking.
- How effectively LEAA and the States have allocated and managed evaluation resources and practices.
- The effectiveness of LEAA's efforts to assist the States and to coordinate Federal, State, and local evaluation resources, programs, and services.

This summary synthesizes our major findings and provides our conclusions and recommendations. However, it

should be noted that the issues are complex and many are interrelated. Consequently, the recommendations are not restricted to one or two areas, but frequently focus on those interdependent problems collectively. The reader is therefore periodically provided with references to those sections in the body of the full report which contain more substantive treatment and discussion of the issues and interrelationships.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Evaluation can and should be an integral part of the management, planning, and decisionmaking processes of LEAA, State planning agencies (SPAs), regional planning units (RPUs), and local governments. However, our findings indicated that LEAA and State evaluation activities and information were not meeting planning, decisionmaking, and policymaking needs of users at different levels of the intergovernmental block grant Crime Control Act Program.

- The amount and types of evaluation work had not been adequate.
- The quality of evaluation activities and products was questionable.
- Evaluation information users' needs were not being met.
- The allocation and management of evaluation resources need improvement.
- Better coordination of evaluation program efforts was needed.

NOT ALL STATES ARE COMPLYING WITH FEDERAL EVALUATION GUIDELINE REQUIREMENTS

The evaluation efforts, activities, and operations of four SPAs we examined varied significantly in level of effort and organization. Three of the four SPAs did not have fully established evaluation programs and, in our opinion, were not meeting LEAA guideline requirements and the intent of the Congress for maintaining an adequate evaluation capability. In the fourth State (Pennsylvania), which was technically in compliance, evaluation efforts were highly decentralized. Eight separate substate RPUs were deciding

what to evaluate, how often, and what level of evaluation was appropriate. (See pp. 26 to 33.) 1/

FEW OUTCOME EVALUATIONS ARE BEING DONE

Outcome evaluation is particularly necessary to decision-makers, planners, and those responsible for formulating and/or changing criminal justice program policies and establishing priorities for funding consideration. Outcome evaluation is designed to determine objectively a program's progress toward an overall goal, for example, reduction of new offenses through successful criminal rehabilitation.

Of 61 project evaluations we sampled, only 16.3 percent adequately presented an assessment of project outcomes.

LIMITED USE OF INTENSIVE EVALUATIONS AND ABSENCE OF PROGRAM-LEVEL EVALUATIONS TO ASSESS IMPACT AND RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

The States must intensively evaluate selected projects or groups of projects according to their planning needs. Such evaluations must incorporate sound evaluation methodologies. Intensive evaluations, as defined by LEAA, are characterized by experimental designs developed before project implementation, use of control groups, independent data collection and analysis, and/or indepth case studies. In three of four States visited, the generation and use of intensive evaluations was minimal and in one State it was nonexistent.

Program-level evaluation provides for the simultaneous assessment of projects which share common outcome objectives and has several economic, technical, and utilitarian advantages over project-by-project approaches to evaluation. (See pp. 41 to 43.) We found no active program-level evaluations being conducted in the four States. However, past experience and plans for such efforts varied significantly; California had performed such evaluations in the past, Oregon had attempted to do them, and Pennsylvania was planning to do so in the future.

EVALUATIONS ARE NOT PLANNED AND DESIGNED BEFORE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

To improve the quality and utility of evaluation processes and resultant information, the planning of an evaluation

1/Page references in this summary refer to pages in the full report issued as GGD-77-72.

study should occur along with the specification and definition of project objectives to insure that they can be measured. Such efforts, where they exist, have been limited. Except for one of the four States visited, there is an absence of criteria for deciding which projects should be evaluated, how much evaluation is needed, when or how often evaluations should be performed, and what level of evaluation is appropriate. In the fourth State (Pennsylvania), the SPA's evaluation and monitoring guidelines were so broad that the RPUs implement them in significantly different ways and experience different results.

One objective of LEAA and State evaluation efforts is to have performance information used at different governmental levels and across criminal justice agencies participating in the Crime Control Act Program, i.e., in policy formulation, planning, decisionmaking, and related management functions, to achieve mandated goals. Evaluation, therefore, is viewed also as a management tool and is required by Federal guidelines. However, SPAs' management and planning processes do not systematically address or incorporate evaluation activities and results. Decisions to do and use evaluations are not based on State comprehensive planning needs contrary to Federal evaluation guideline requirements. (See pp. 97 to 101.) In addition, LEAA's National Evaluation Program (NEP) is not designed, nor does it target its results, to meet the specific needs of users for planning, decision-making, and policymaking at different levels in the program. (See pp. 101 to 103 and 106 to 111.)

EVALUATION WORK PERFORMED HAS SIGNIFICANT DEFICIENCIES

Based on our review of LEAA and State evaluation activities and procedures and an analysis of a sample of evaluation reports, we determined that the evaluation work performed had significant deficiencies. Examples follow.

- Almost 70 percent of the evaluations did not present the primary assumptions on which the projects' goals, objectives, and activities were based.
- 71 percent did not present, discuss, or draw upon previous related research or evaluation in their treatment of the goals, objectives, activities, hypotheses, or problem statements of the projects evaluated.
- 55 percent did not present project hypotheses or relate hypotheses to the projects' goals and objectives.

- Only 19 percent adequately described the evaluation research design and methodology.
- 79 percent of the evaluation reports reviewed had no procedures to determine the validity and reliability of evaluation measures used and the data gathered.
- Only 26 percent adequately presented a statement of findings which specified project outcomes, based on an analysis of data and information; in 62 percent, we rated the statement of evaluation conclusions "inadequate" or "poor," based on the results of our analysis and evaluation findings.
- Only 14 percent provided an adequate, concise, executive-type summary of project goals, objectives, and results, drawing conclusions and making recommendations where appropriate.

Overall, evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations frequently were imprecise and had little utility for planning, decisionmaking, and policymaking on an inter-governmental basis. The inability to interpret the meaning of evaluation results and draw valid conclusions further restricted the development of appropriate recommendations for implementing programs which adequately address crime and delinquency problems and needs. Such limitations often resulted in State and local governments reinvesting substantial resources to explore the question a second or even a third time. Much of the evaluation work done did not provide for an adequate presentation of evaluation findings and conclusions which specified project outcomes. Further, there were no standards and procedures for reporting evaluation results or for determining the validity and reliability of evaluation findings. (See pp. 74 to 77.)

Such deficiencies in prior evaluations limit the efficacy of LEAA's National Evaluation Program. (See pp. 50 to 64.)

EVALUATION INFORMATION
USERS' NEEDS ARE NOT BEING MET

Unless decisionmakers, planners, and policymakers are able to participate in the process of identifying (1) what should be evaluated, (2) what type of information will be needed, and (3) when and in what form it will be needed, the evaluation process and its products may very well not be used or not be of relevance in meeting their needs.

Few State decisionmakers are consulted in advance by LEAA and their SPAs to identify and define their evaluation information feedback needs. Fifty-two percent of the key State officials who responded to our questionnaire indicated that neither they nor their staffs had ever been consulted about including their evaluation information needs in reporting requirements placed on formal evaluations of LEAA and/or SPA programs and projects. (See pp. 78 to 81.)

None of the four States visited had established systematic procedures for the dissemination and timely feedback of evaluation results for decisionmaking, State comprehensive planning, and policy formulation. Much of the evaluation information which has been generated has not been available in time or has had limited utility for such purposes. Furthermore, LEAA and the States have not implemented our previous recommendation for establishing impact evaluation information and reporting systems to insure the availability of data on the impact of similar projects, comparability of evaluation results, and reduction in the need for many individual evaluations done on a project-by-project basis. (See ch. 1, pp. 5 to 8.)

Based on a review of evaluation programs, processes, products, and contact with State officials, we determined that there is very little feedback of valid and reliable evaluation information to policymakers and decisionmakers on the relative effectiveness, impact, and side effects of funded LEAA and State programs and projects. As a consequence, decisions and policies made at the State and local levels regarding continued Federal funding or assumption of costs by States or localities are frequently unaffected by the results of evaluations which have been conducted. Our examination of LEAA and State evaluation strategies indicated that they do not adequately address the full scope and coverage of resources allocated through the Crime Control Act Program which may affect or produce potentially counterproductive side effects in other State and local government programs and services. (See pp. 103 to 111.)

Overall, State and local officials were not satisfied with LEAA and State evaluation efforts and information. Thirty percent of the key decisionmakers and policymakers who responded to our questionnaire indicated that they had not received evaluation information from LEAA or their SPAs; another 22.5 percent indicated dissatisfaction with what they had received. Only 15 percent rated LEAA evaluation efforts as "frequently" or "completely" adequate in meeting their evaluation information needs, and 45 percent rated their SPAs'

evaluation efforts as "inadequate" to "very inadequate." Nationwide surveys in 1975 by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, the National League of Cities, and the U.S. Conference on Mayors indicated similar views among local government officials.

RESOURCES ALLOCATED FOR EVALUATION ARE INADEQUATE

Organizational commitment, clear and concise assignment of responsibility and authority, and the allocation of adequate resources are important to successful planning, design, execution, and use of evaluation results. Without adequate funding and staff to support and maintain evaluation functions, activities, and services, evaluation work simply cannot be adequately performed. At the time of our review, funds and staff allocated by LEAA and the States were inadequate for planning, managing, doing, and effectively using evaluation. Some States had assigned low priority to evaluation programs and activities. For fiscal year 1976 LEAA allocated slightly less than 60 percent of the funds recommended by the Evaluation Policy Task Force, appointed by the Administrator. Only 21 percent of the fiscal year 1976 funds recommended for use in NEP had been allocated for that effort.

The States collectively have allocated for evaluation activities less than 1 percent of the total LEAA funds available to them. State officials in three of the four States visited indicated that the amount of funds available to them under part B of the 1973 Crime Control Act to plan, design, and carry out evaluations has been totally inadequate. Because of the limited availability, inadequate amounts, and administrative restrictions on the use of part B, C, and E funds for evaluation, States have used a variety of management strategies to support evaluation efforts. Each has disadvantages and some advantages, depending on the organization of the SPA. (See pp. 127 to 130.)

ORGANIZATION OF EVALUATION FUNCTIONS LACKS DIRECTION AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

To insure that evaluation results are generated and used and that they are relevant to the needs of planners, program/project managers, decisionmakers, and policymakers, evaluation functions and activities require effective organization and sound management practices in performing such tasks as:

- Planning and preparing programs and projects to insure they can be evaluated.
- Developing an evaluation strategy and approach which will include sufficient time to adequately develop the necessary design for evaluation.
- Selecting the most cost-effective methods for executing evaluation studies.
- Providing for optimum use and dissemination of evaluation results.
- Effectively managing resources and staff and insuring necessary coordination among a variety of agencies and at different levels of government which are either directly or indirectly involved in evaluation activities.

At the time of our review, the manner and methods by which LEAA evaluation efforts were conducted varied widely. LEAA personnel cited difficulties in

- being able to monitor agreements,
- expanding evaluation program activities to an acceptable level,
- doing extensive evaluation work and validating evaluation results due to limited staff, and
- achieving coordination between the primary LEAA evaluation unit and other LEAA units responsible for the programs being evaluated.

In two of four LEAA regional offices, little apparent effort had been expended to ascertain the extent to which SPA evaluation processes and practices were in fact conducted and accomplishing the objectives set forth in their respective State plans. Frequent changes in LEAA and SPA administrators and in LEAA guideline requirements for evaluation have caused confusion and difficulties in doing and using evaluations.

A recent study published by LEAA substantiates our findings that there is little or no integration of evaluation activities into the SPAs' overall management structures. Evaluation functions, activities, and program services lack centralized direction and effective management controls to

assure the accomplishment of evaluation goals and objectives and to meet the needs of a variety of evaluation information user groups. Furthermore, the organizational placement of the evaluation function is too far removed from top management to be effective. (See pp. 134 to 146.)

Three of the four States visited evidenced the need for more effective training and coordinated technical assistance in doing and using evaluations. None of the four States had an established evaluation training program for SPA, RPU, local government, or criminal justice agency personnel.

BETTER COORDINATION OF EVALUATION PROGRAM EFFORTS IS NEEDED

Coordination and cooperation among participants in the evaluation process is essential to utilize effectively the limited resources, expertise, and newly developed techniques for gaging the impact and relative effectiveness of Federal assistance efforts administered on an intergovernmental basis.

The complexity and timing of planning, decisionmaking, and policymaking functions carried out in implementing the Crime Control Act Program significantly affect the quantity, quality, and utility of evaluation activities and results. The organization and management of evaluation program activities within LEAA, as well as at State and local levels, also significantly have an impact upon the effectiveness of evaluation efforts and information generated.

We found significant problems associated with the coordination of evaluation activities and related planning and action program implementation efforts at the national, State, and local levels at the time of our review. (See pp. 147 to 158.) LEAA efforts to meet the Knowledge Goal, as outlined by the 1974 LEAA Evaluation Policy Task Force, are not coordinated and do not make the best use of available resources. NEP knowledge-building activities underway in several LEAA offices at the time of our review were not structured in a manner that would produce the quality or amount of information which would be possible under a more systematic approach. Authority for evaluation "knowledge" efforts is fragmented, and activities are diffused throughout LEAA. Related evaluation projects and programs can be undertaken by two or more LEAA headquarters offices at the same time without coordination. There is little uniformity in evaluation decisions or policies from office to office.

STATE AND LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN LEAA
EVALUATION PROGRAM DECISIONS IS LIMITED

LEAA has not provided for systematic and substantive involvement of, or initiated consultation in advance with, State and local decisionmakers and policymakers in the development of evaluation policies and guideline requirements and in:

- Deciding (1) what programs and projects should be evaluated and at what level and (2) how best to carry out the evaluation effort.
- Identifying and determining evaluation information users' needs.
- Developing the most appropriate and effective feedback mechanism for communicating evaluation results.

SPA officials in three of the four States visited indicated they had limited involvement in or minimal working knowledge of NEP, or had experienced confusion in the planning of NEP.

Many of LEAA's current evaluation initiatives are not based on a thorough assessment of State and local users' needs. Many of LEAA's evaluation program initiatives focus primarily on marketing and disseminating visible products assumed to be useful to planners, decisionmakers, and policymakers at various governmental levels and/or the research community. Further, LEAA's evaluation research efforts have not adequately provided for, or sufficiently addressed, the needs of States and localities to facilitate measurement of the impact and effectiveness of funded action programs and related projects. SPA officials in three of the four States visited were concerned about the substance of LEAA evaluation efforts and dissemination of results, and many State and local officials were not satisfied with LEAA and State evaluation program efforts.

LEAA officials also criticized LEAA guidance and stated that LEAA evaluation program efforts fall short of substantially meeting the evaluation needs of SPAs, RPU's, and others.

DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS OF
COORDINATING THE EVALUATION OF
LEAA'S HIGH IMPACT ANTI-CRIME PROGRAM

In fiscal year 1972 LEAA initiated the \$160 million High Impact Anti-Crime Program (Impact Cities Program). It was

designed to reduce the incidence of stranger-to-stranger crime (murder, rape, assault, robbery, and burglary) in eight major metropolitan cities by 5 percent within 2 years and by 20 percent within 5 years from program implementation. LEAA contracted with the Mitre Corporation to evaluate the program. Mitre's 1976 report indicated there were problems of inadequate evaluation planning and poor coordination of evaluation activities and responsibilities at Federal, State, and local levels. Therefore, Mitre was unable to provide evaluation findings concerning the overall impact and effectiveness of the Impact Cities Program.

The Impact Cities Program relegated the responsibility for assuring adequate evaluation planning and the monitoring of the projects and the evaluation to the cities; quality control and review of their adequacy rested with the SPA and/or the cognizant LEAA regional office. However, LEAA did not mandate the following:

- Standards for evaluation.
- Requirements for comparable and uniform data (for planning and evaluation purposes).
- Systematic monitoring of State planning and assistance functions relative to evaluation of the Impact Cities Program.

The absence of such management controls and coordination between Federal, State, and local levels negatively affected the adequacy of evaluation efforts and results.

Dependence on local data sources limited the type of evaluation strategies which would be employed in the National Level Evaluation of the Impact Cities Program. Moreover, Mitre reported that cost constraints

- prevented the use of valid control or comparison groups using cities not in the Impact Cities Program,
- precluded area- or target-group-specific data collection within the impact cities, and
- effectively prevented Mitre from remedying local evaluation problems and data deficiencies in the eight Impact cities.

As a consequence, Mitre stated that no experimental or even quasi-experimental design could be generated, and the resultant National Level Evaluation concentrated on process rather than outcome.

Mitre also stated that problems experienced in some of the participating cities in "operationalizing" the Impact Cities Program approach (crime-oriented planning, implementation, and evaluation). These problems, Mitre said were interrelated and had adversely affected the evaluation process and resultant information. The pattern observed by the National Level Evaluation contractor typically involved:

- Failure to collect data and substantiate crime problems and priorities on a national basis.
- Gaps in initial planning, discovered during program implementation phases, led to uncertainties in priorities and precluded linkage of anticrime strategies based on sufficient analysis and identification of crime problems.
- Lack of baseline data for evaluation.
- Inadequate evaluations.
- Failure to affect or modify projects through evaluation information feedback on a timely basis.
- Most importantly, inability to assess and identify achievements of anticrime projects in terms of crime reduction outcome.

In summary, the National Level evaluator stated that the High Impact Anti-Crime Program evaluation did not address the question of programwide effectiveness. Project-level evaluations of various anticrime strategies employed indicated that of the 233 projects only 33 (14.2 percent), representing \$30.5 million (19 percent of the funds awarded) were effective; 2 additional projects were rated as successful through "secondary analysis" by the National Level Evaluation contractor. Although additional projects may have been effective, the inadequacy of the evaluations (if performed at all) may have limited new knowledge and/or awareness of demonstrated effectiveness and crime reduction impact.

Ineffective coordination, as well as inadequacies and difficulties in allocating, managing, and using evaluation

resources, processes, and results, evident in the LEAA's High Impact Anti-Crime Program, bore striking similarity to deficiencies we identified in other LEAA Federal and State evaluation efforts and products.

CONCLUSIONS

It is not clear that LEAA and the States are any further along in

- knowing which specific program and project strategies have been successful and, importantly, which have not or
- determining what cumulative impact Federal funding may have had on the effectiveness and efficiency of Federal, State, and local government programs and services, in reducing crime and improving criminal justice system performance.

Answers to these questions must be made available to all persons responsible for planning, decisionmaking, and policy-making functions involving the allocation of resources designed to reduce, control, and prevent crime and juvenile delinquency.

Although recent LEAA efforts to reexamine its evaluation program activities have underscored the need for, and common problems experienced with, evaluation, we believe that little concerted action will be forthcoming which would measurably improve the situation.

Most of the actions recommended to the LEAA Administrator by the LEAA Evaluation Policy Working Group focused primarily on internal LEAA matters. There does not appear to be sufficient commitment to allocate substantial additional resources to State evaluation efforts. Therefore, the evaluation capabilities of the States more than likely may continue to be constrained by insufficient resources, technical assistance, and training, even though 85 percent of the money and a considerably greater proportion of the decisionmaking and planning effort rest with the States and localities. National evaluation strategies which depend on the adequacy of prior evaluation work or on evaluation planning and preparation of programs and projects, to assure their evaluability, being performed by the States, under these circumstances, are unlikely to produce significant changes in the quality and utility of evaluation information produced.

LEAA must place greater emphasis on building evaluation into programs and projects, before their implementation, at the Federal, State, and local levels. LEAA must exercise greater leadership by providing assistance and coordination of evaluation functions and activities both within its organization and between it and the States, RPUs, and local governments to insure that the needs of evaluation information users are being met.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Attorney General direct LEAA to provide for the substantive involvement of State and local officials in formulating evaluation policies, guidelines, and requirements. Such efforts should include but not be limited to:

- Establishing an evaluation coordinating committee composed of representatives from the Department of Justice, LEAA, SPAs, RPUs, local governments, criminal justice agencies, and private citizens to better coordinate and use evaluation programs, services, and results. This committee should be similar to that recommended by the 1974 LEAA Evaluation Policy Task Force in its March 1, 1974, report.
- Systematically assessing evaluation information feedback needs of States and localities periodically, but at least annually.

To insure that sufficient resources are available to carry out evaluation responsibilities and to improve management of evaluation functions, the Attorney General should direct the Administrator of LEAA to:

- Provide for the organizational placement of LEAA evaluation responsibilities and authority minimally at the Deputy Administrator level.
- Strengthen the evaluation capabilities at Federal, State, and local levels, by providing additional resources to adequately plan, design, and carry out evaluations and effectively utilize evaluation information. To accomplish this LEAA needs to:
 1. Recruit and effectively allocate additional qualified evaluation personnel to help the States, RPUs, and local governments develop and utilize evaluation processes and results.

2. Expand technical and management assistance and training in evaluation provided to States and localities.
3. Issue guidelines requiring the States to provide sufficient funds for evaluation and mandate the use of these funds for evaluation purposes only.

To improve the quality and utility of evaluation results and information in a cost-effective manner, the Attorney General should direct the Administrator to:

- Increase the priority emphasis of the Administration's research and development efforts and focus such efforts upon providing (1) valid and reliable measures of crime and criminal justice system performance and (2) related tools and methodological techniques for determining the crime reduction impact, relative effectiveness, and side effects of programs and projects funded by LEAA and the States.
- Develop standardized, uniform, valid, and reliable data bases, evaluation measures, and assessment criteria to determine the impact of a variety of programs on defined target populations at risk and for defined geographic areas.
- Stimulate and increase the use of program-level and outcome evaluations, to generate valid and comparable information about the success rates and costs for projects which have different strategies but are designed to achieve the same or similar end results.
- Develop and require standardized reporting systems for evaluation and, in conjunction with the States, develop criteria for determining what to evaluate and for specifying appropriate levels of evaluation to meet a variety of evaluation users' needs.
- Standardize the quality control of evaluation processes and results to insure comparability, reliability, and validity of information generated for decisionmaking and planning.
- Develop and implement, in conjunction with the States, impact evaluation information and reporting systems, previously recommended by us to promote increased dissemination and timely feedback of evaluation results.

We recommend also that the Attorney General examine and consider proposing one or a combination of the following options for changes in the legislation to be considered by the Congress.

Funding for evaluation

- Establish a separate part in the legislation which mandates an adequate amount of funds which may be used for evaluation purposes only.
- Mandate that a certain percentage of parts B, C, E, and Juvenile Justice funds be set aside by the States for evaluation purposes only. The funds would not be subject to pass-through and matching fund requirements.
- Require LEAA to allocate more of its discretionary funds to the States to develop and maintain more effective evaluation capabilities.

Program evaluation advisory council

- Provide for the establishment of a program evaluation advisory council to (1) provide consultation and assistance to LEAA, (2) review evaluation programs, policies, and plans, and (3) advise the Attorney General and the Administrator of LEAA. The Office of Management and Budget, the National Academy of Sciences, the Office of Science and Technology, criminal justice research organizations, SPAs, RPU's, and local governments should be represented on the council.

ANALYSIS OF COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND STATES REVIEWED

While the Department of Justice is not in substantive disagreement with our conclusions overall, it believes it has taken steps to deal with some of the problems noted. (See app. I of the full report.) However, given the current debate over the appropriate structure and thrust of LEAA programming, it remains an empirical question whether recent agency initiatives in evaluation will (1) be fully implemented, (2) have demonstrative effect on the quantity, quality, and utility of State and local evaluation efforts, and (3) meet the evaluation information needs of a variety of users at different levels in the intergovernmental Crime Control Act program.

Copies of the draft report were sent to each of the four State planning agencies. Their comments were considered in the report, and changes to the report have been made where appropriate. Generally, the States agreed with our conclusions. Our analysis of agency comments and the Department of Justice's response to our recommendations is discussed in chapter 8 of the full report (GGD-77-72).

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CONGRESS

Since LEAA funds constitute a small proportion of all governments' crime reduction and criminal justice expenditures, consideration could be given to expanding LEAA's research, development, demonstration, and evaluation role, but with greater involvement and conceptual input from States and localities in decisions and policies affecting the scope and direction of such activities on a direct basis. A significant increase in the amount of the Federal investment may not be necessary. However, a different system of allocating discretionary and block grant funds might be necessary. 1/

A national strategy to reduce crime under this approach would build on program efforts which, based on rigorously controlled research, are proven to produce a significant crime reduction outcome. States and localities could participate in the planning, implementation, and management of projects proven to have merit.

Systematically planned variation in program approaches, which "build in" the evaluation requirement before implementing individual project activities, would be emphasized. Those efforts which have empirically demonstrated crime reduction payoffs could then be funded under differing State and local conditions with continuing evaluation of their relative effectiveness. Programs and component projects which have proven successful in different locales could then be assumed by additional States and localities with increased confidence because of their demonstrated impact on crime and delinquency problems.

1/See our Jan. 27, 1978, staff study, "Federal Crime Control Assistance: A Discussion of the Program and Possible Alternatives," GGD-78-28, pp. 108 to 116, for an expanded discussion of this approach.

(18574)