

DEEP

DRUG ENFORCEMENT, EDUCATION & PREVENTION PROJECT

PROGRAM EVALUATION STUDY

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iOW InsideOUT
WRITERS

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Executive Summary

The Drug Enforcement, Education and Prevention Project (DEEP) is a multipronged approach to address drug trafficking and criminal organizations in Los Angeles County, provide support and services to at-risk youth, assist mentally ill county inmates in receiving proper mental health care and more efficient legal services, and provide offender reentry services through integrative case management. DEEP consists of eight different initiatives that can be broken down to reflect two key approaches.

The first concerns programs under the umbrella of enforcement in relation to drug trafficking and other serious crime. This includes the crime taskforces L.A. IMPACT (Los Angeles Interagency Metropolitan Police Apprehension Crime Taskforce) and Cal-MET (California Multi-Jurisdictional Methamphetamine Enforcement Team); LA CLEAR (Los Angeles County Regional Criminal Information Clearinghouse), responsible for providing operational and analytical support to law enforcement; CHESS (Clearinghouse Electronic Surveillance System) of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, responsible for securing wiretaps; and TOUGH (Taking Out Urban Gang Headquarters) of the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office that engages in nuisance property abatement. The second consists of programs that facilitate education and prevention. This includes SYF (Sheriff's Youth Foundation), which provides opportunities for the healthy development of at-risk youth; PD-JMHL (Public Defender Jail Mental Health Liaison Project), responsible for addressing the needs of mentally ill county jail inmates; and IOW (InsideOUT Writers Alumni Program) which focuses on successful reentry of youthful offenders.

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the initiatives that make up DEEP in order to better understand their operations and assess their productivity. While causal attribution is not possible within the parameters of the data we were supplied, it is possible to speak to the effectiveness of these different entities and explore the components that are critical for their success. This evaluation employed quantitative data, going beyond the grant period to the year 2013 where possible in order to examine the consistency of efforts, and qualitative methods to provide greater depth of understanding than simple numbers can achieve.

Major Findings

Ambitious in scope, DEEP represents seemingly disparate efforts which fall along a spectrum of concerns for Los Angeles County that ultimately share the common mission of securing the health and safety of residents. These endeavors are further united in the dedication and perseverance of the practitioners who work to meet these objectives. This commitment is all the more commendable given how labor intensive these undertakings truly are. Across the board, we found a wealth of evidence that these initiatives are consistently and highly productive within the parameters of the resources available to them. Investigative efforts against mid- to high-level drug trafficking organizations have paid off handsomely in terms of seizing massive amounts

of illegal narcotics intended for distribution in the county. Supporting programs effectively secure wiretaps for investigations and abate nuisance properties, while heightening officer security and efficiency through deconfliction and analytical services. Programs also provide services that successfully mitigate risk of unhealthy behaviors and manage the care of populations affected by drugs, crime and mental illness. Collectively, DEEP is positioned to address a constellation of pressing issues that plague Los Angeles County and effect real change.

The findings here illustrate that a confluence of factors contribute to the success of these programs. Below we discuss those findings that are key for understanding the nature of their accomplishments and the contexts in which they occur.

L.A. IMPACT: The taskforce has been invaluable to the efforts against drug trafficking organizations in Los Angeles County. Between 2013 and 2017, L.A. IMPACT dismantled nearly 300 clandestine drug labs and seized over 100,000 pounds of drugs, effectively preventing over one and a half billion doses of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine from reaching communities. While still making considerable drug seizures in 2017, there was a steep decline in the numbers, most notably for marijuana. This decrease is a result of having to redistribute resources and alter taskforce focus to accommodate funding cuts and the legalization of recreational marijuana in California. While increasing seizures indicate fentanyl is finding its way west, methamphetamine remains a larger concern. Ultimately, the taskforce's strength lies in the diverse expertise of officers from primarily local agencies, particularly when that expertise is not normally found in the personnel assigned to L.A. IMPACT. But its weakness is that this reliance is seriously undercut when budgetary and personnel restraints within these partner agencies result in the loss of officers available to the taskforce.

Cal-MMET: As the "boots on the ground" for investigative efforts of other law enforcement operations targeting the trafficking of methamphetamine, Cal-MMET has shown a consistently high level of productivity. Between 2013 and 2017, the team seized over 6,000 pounds of illicit drugs and arrested over 400 individuals, preventing the distribution of over 100 million doses of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine in Los Angeles County. As other law enforcement teams might ultimately make seizures or arrests due to Cal-MMET's work, their own statistics do not demonstrate the full breadth of their contributions or speak to the role they play in enhancing law enforcement effectiveness. The intensive nature of the long-term investigations Cal-MMET engages in is compounded by the team's small size and great demand for their assistance. Having the necessary resources, such as additional personnel and air support, will be critical to meet the future demands surely to be placed on them if drug trafficking organizations increasingly turn to fentanyl and became more financially secure using legal marijuana dispensaries for money laundering.

LA CLEAR: The services of LA CLEAR offer vital investigative support for law enforcement operations in Southern California. Well over a million inquiries were made to its case/subject database between 2013 and 2017, resulting in approximately half a million instances in which agencies were possibly engaged in overlapping investigations or had intelligence to share. The Watch Center tracked over 300,000 critical events and gave over 27,000 notices of possible

conflicts between operations. Unmeasurable is the extent to which law enforcement agencies benefited from these services, but undoubtedly LA CLEAR allows agencies to conserve limited resources by preventing the duplication of investigative efforts and augmenting officer safety by averting possible conflicts in the field. Analytical support helps make the most efficient use of investigators' time and can strengthen cases by providing more in-depth analysis of complex data produced by investigations. The Watch Center and the Analytical Unit analysts are extremely productive, but decreased funding has made keeping a sufficient number of analysts a challenge.

CHESS: As a legally mandated part of the wiretap process, CHESS is a consistently successful component; just over 350 wiretap orders were sought between 2013 and 2017, with 95% of orders being obtained. Those orders not secured were typically due to withdrawn applications when a suspect had switched phones and a new application was required. Prosecution rates proved a poor fit for measuring the productivity of CHESS, as wiretaps occur as part of investigations which may last months or years before culminating in criminal charges. The exceptional success rate for securing orders is due to the expertise and dedication of the Deputy District Attorneys and their supervisors, as well as training CHESS provides law enforcement as to the highly restrictive wiretap statute. A rigorous, time consuming review process is undertaken for each application. Only two attorneys handle applications as a result of funding cuts, and the number of applications has increased in recent years. This makes their success rate at obtaining orders even more remarkable when it is considered they also have numerous other duties to contend with, such as ensuring wiretap orders receive extensions.

TOUGH: With 40 nuisance property abatement procedures initiated and only three properties not considered abated between July 2015 and December 2017, TOUGH has shown itself to be effective within broader law enforcement efforts to address criminal operations. Rarely requiring injunctions to meet the objectives of reducing gang and illegal narcotic activities at locations, the chief methods for achieving compliance are case conferences with property owners and seeking evictions of problematic tenants. The TOUGH attorney can require owners to engage in a range of remedies, including improvements to the property and changes to management practices. As the almost perfect success rate indicates, these remedies have proved to be highly successful. While the potential for displacement of problems is very real, the nature of property abatement supports an outlook of moving onto the next property as needed. That the TOUGH attorney is not dedicated solely to L.A. IMPACT identified properties and only has jurisdiction within the City of Los Angeles are limitations that will need to be addressed.

SYF: The Sheriff's Youth Foundation serves thousands of at-risk youth in 17 Youth Academies, with a focus on academics, although a variety of other programming is also provided. In 2015 and 2016, 1,533 youth participated in sports, including soccer, boxing, and tennis. Summer months are particularly busy, with 1,850 youth participating during the summer of 2017. There is also Camp COURAGE, which attracted 150 young people in 2016-2017, as well as Life After High School in which 35 youth participated in 2017. In 2016, SYF put on the Anti-Drug Pilot Program in several Academies. Surveys completed by youth participating in the program showed most felt drugs and alcohol were difficult to obtain, had no family or friends who used illegal drugs and felt they could have an impact on their environments. However, when someone has a family

member who uses illegal drugs, they are more likely to have friends using drugs; those with people in their lives who use illegal drugs are also less likely to believe they are empowered to effect change in their environments. Overall, these findings indicate how important SYF is in Los Angeles County. The program effectively gets thousands of kids off the streets, offers healthy and safe activities, and provides them with positive role models, which in turn can affect the choices they make and how impactful they feel in their communities.

PD-JMHL: The PD-JMHL program was designed to help Deputy Public Defenders more efficiently represent mentally ill clients with a social worker serving as a liaison in the county jails, with the goal of moving them out of custody and into treatment in the community. Between 2016 and 2017, a total of 562 clients were referred to the program, over 70% coming from just two courts. The social worker had 3,724 interactions made on behalf of the program's clients, with 56 clients linked with community programs upon release. The Deputy Public Defenders felt the program has been successful in producing court miss-outs that rarely last longer than a day and fewer extractions actually being carried out, both of which have resulted in the faster resolution of cases. Providing the most efficient legal representation to mentally ill clients detained in county jails is critical not only for alleviating jail overcrowding, but also for ensuring these clients are receiving the most appropriate treatment outside of county correctional facilities, so they can more successfully reenter society.

IOW: InsideOUT Writers provides support and case management services to formerly incarcerated youth. Between April 2015 and December 2017, case managers made 652 recorded contacts with 87 Alumni. Types of interactions varied, most frequently for follow-up communications, check-ins, and counselling. As IOW's signature activity, there were 138 writing circles with 722 participants during this time. The dedication of IOW staff is demonstrated by the large number of services they provide despite having limited resources. However, the decrease in numbers over the course of the grant period shows the need for at least one full-time case manager. Case studies show proactive case management can keep Alumni involved in the program, addressing their trauma, and making progress toward more healthy lifestyles. As former Alumni, the junior case manager and director believe the most important program feature is the support and family atmosphere provided. The data suggest IOW effectively helps young people find the support and services needed to successfully reenter their communities.

Challenges and Future Directions

Two themes emerged as to the challenges that each of the eight initiatives face: funding and the need for greater infrastructure as it pertains to data collection.

Funding: Common to all initiatives was the lack of sufficient funding which has placed an undue burden on personnel and their operations in meeting the demands of their missions. Productivity was declined or was maintained at the cost of heavy workloads and lessened efficiency. A need for more personnel was the primary problem, relating to issues of data collection and input, fewer clients being served or served in a less timely manner, and a decreased amount of illegal

narcotics being prevented from reaching the streets. Finding new sources of revenue is crucial if programs and services are to be sustainable and reach their full potential. Their services are essential to communities, as evidenced by the many issues still plaguing Los Angeles County. Drug trafficking organizations and substance abuse are rife, and it seems certain the demand for services addressing the needs of at-risk populations shows no signs of declining.

Data Infrastructure: The data needs for this evaluation were many and varied, requiring evaluators to design data collection tools in some cases, and allowing for observation of existing data systems and the limitations in others. Typically, initiatives do not have a position dedicated to the input, management, and retrieval of operational data. It must be appreciated that prior to this evaluation some initiatives had only employed data for internally tracking their performance. It is important for these programs to consider the broader implications of the data and how it might be best employed to inform the future. Ultimately, data are vital for performance assessments to ensure program goals are actually met. When funding is contingent upon showing such effectiveness and use of best practices, the importance of a strong data infrastructure cannot be overstated.

Recommendations and Funding Needs

L.A. IMPACT: There are two avenues the taskforce should pursue to maximize the efficiency of drug interdiction efforts and ensure the necessary funding can be secured. This includes:

- Expanding the taskforce's areas of expertise
- Increasing public profile and utilization of data

The seizure of drugs is only part of the battle in undoing drug trafficking organizations when money laundering is crucial to their operations, and the increasing technological sophistication of these organizations outstrips that of law enforcement. L.A. IMPACT should acquire personnel who have the expertise to understand and address these areas. In the pursuit of new funding, L.A. IMPACT should consider new ways to heighten its public profile that can further promote its accomplishments, as well as partner with community organizations to raise awareness of drug abuse. L.A. IMPACT should also invest in building a data infrastructure that allows easier access to data and provides more nuanced data that unmask smaller accomplishments required to achieve the larger outcomes of seizures and arrests.

Cal-MMET: More funding is certainly the key to meeting the team's need for additional personnel. In the quest to secure more funding, we recommend that Cal-MMET consider:

- Raising public awareness of Cal-MMET operations
- Seeking to track arrests and seizures made by other teams

The team would be well-served to promote their accomplishments to generate interest from potential funders and partner agencies, as well as secure necessary resources, such as air

support. Another potential area for increasing awareness of the true nature of the team's accomplishments concerns exploring the feasibility of collecting data regarding arrests, seizures, and other actions that are undertaken by other agencies as a result of Cal-MMET's investigative work.

LA CLEAR: The ever-decreasing funding for LA CLEAR threatens to compromise the quality of the support services they provide law enforcement agencies in Southern California. There are two needs that are most pressing and for which receiving sufficient funding will always be a concern. These include:

- Maintaining an adequate number of analysts to meet demands for service
- Providing opportunities for educational and technological growth

The need for increased funding in order to hire more analysts is imperative if the Watch Center and Analytical Unit are to maintain the quality of their services to the law enforcement community. Also, opportunities must be provided for analysts and technicians to receive education and training on trends, techniques, and technology, allowing them to remain the "go to" resource they are at present time for law enforcement agencies and taskforces in the area.

CHESS: The demand for wiretaps appears to be growing, making sufficient funding all that much more important. The two greatest needs that CHESS requires additional funding for are:

- An additional Deputy District Attorney to be assigned to CHESS
- Hiring of a full-time Wiretap Coordinator

Not only is funding for the attorneys only at 26%, a third attorney assigned to the unit was lost because of funding cuts. There are also many tasks the attorneys simply do not have time for and ultimately fall to an already overburdened administrative staff. But there is also the fact that the CHESS database requires updating and maintaining in order to be able to effectively track and assess performance of the unit.

TOUGH: There are two primary issues that additional funding will address for increasing the use of TOUGH as an effective law enforcement tool, and those are:

- Having a TOUGH attorney dedicated to L.A. IMPACT operations
- Seeking countywide jurisdiction for abatement procedures

Given the scale of L.A. IMPACT operations, having a TOUGH attorney whose focus is L.A. IMPACT is necessary, strengthening the broader efforts to address criminal activity at certain properties. Though complex for the boundaries involved, there is also the matter of seeking abatement procedures beyond the borders of Los Angeles to other cities in Los Angeles County to alleviate coordination efforts with different jurisdictions.

SYF: SYF consistently serves thousands of youth every year. In order to continue to maintain such high productivity, we recommend:

- Adding more staff at the Youth Academies
- Building an improved data collection and management system

More staff is needed in order to reach the desired youth-mentor ratio in the larger Youth Academies, allowing mentors to accommodate youth with different needs and provide more individualized attention. There is also a need for an improved infrastructure that includes data collection procedures for all continuing programs. The addition of a staff member who can oversee data collection and reporting would be beneficial, though not mandatory, if other staff are properly trained.

PD-JMHL: Limited personnel is the greatest challenge for this program. With more funding, more mentally ill inmates can be served and appropriate data collected. To this end, we recommend:

- Hiring additional case managers and expanding the program to other courts
- Expanding data collection processes by adding a dedicated data specialist

There is a need for additional social workers to be available to Deputy Public Defenders across Los Angeles County. Further, social workers should not be responsible for all data entry as their time would clearly be better used working with attorneys and clients. Therefore, a data specialist should be added to the program who will be responsible for data collection, entry and maintenance, which will allow for more comprehensive data collection and assessment.

IOW: As with each of the other programs, IOW needs to secure more funding in order to expand personnel to better serve the young people in their program. We therefore, recommend:

- Hiring a full-time case manager
- Creating a more sophisticated data infrastructure

In order to effectively serve the current Alumni and allow for program growth, a minimum of one full time case manager should be hired to be able to meet the requirements of both providing case management services and entering data on the services provided. Improving data processes is also critical, requiring the creation of a sophisticated data collection system that will help improve the quantity and quality of data collected and streamline data retrieval and reporting.

When considering the overarching premise of DEEP there are certainly multiple issues each initiative must address. Perhaps the greatest is a lack of coordination among the various components of DEEP. The drug enforcement-related initiatives have a long and synergistic relationship, with the drug interdiction efforts of L.A. IMPACT and Cal-MMET strengthened through the assistance and support provided by CHESS, TOUGH, and LA CLEAR. The inclusion of IOW, PD-JMHL, and SYF as partners in a comprehensive approach is more recent and it has not

been explicated how they might coordinate with their drug enforcement-related counterparts. That drug enforcement, education and prevention can work more closely in their efforts to achieve common goals of reducing the problems of drugs and crime in Los Angeles County is not only possible, but critical. The initiatives of DEEP should explore new avenues for collaboration and strengthening efforts if meaningful, long-term change is to occur.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Drug Enforcement, Education and Prevention Project (DEEP) is a multipronged approach to address drug trafficking and criminal organizations in Los Angeles County, providing support and services to at-risk youth, assist mentally ill county inmates in receiving proper mental health care and more efficient legal services, and provide offender reentry services through integrative case management. DEEP consists of the following programs:

- L.A. IMPACT (Los Angeles Interagency Metropolitan Police Apprehension Crime Taskforce)
- Cal-MMET (California Multi-Jurisdictional Methamphetamine Enforcement Team)
- LA CLEAR (Los Angeles County Regional Criminal Information Clearinghouse)
- CHESS (Clearinghouse Electronic Surveillance System)
- TOUGH (Taking Out Urban Gang Headquarters)
- SYF (Sheriff's Youth Foundation)
- PD-JMHL (Public Defender Jail Mental Health Liaison Project)
- IOW (InsideOUT Writers Alumni Program)

That a need exists for a comprehensive and far reaching approach that can mitigate some of the key factors that contribute to the problems of illegal drugs and crime in the county is indisputable. Los Angeles County covers 4,060 square miles and is the most populous county in the nation; according to Census estimates for 2016, there were 10,137,915 people living in the county, an increase of 3.3% since 2010. The median household income was \$57,952, with a per capita income of \$29,301. The county poverty rate is 16.3%, which is substantially larger than the national average of 12.7%. Of all youth 17 and younger who live in the county, 23.4% are living in poverty. The county has almost 21,000 miles of public roads of which 500 miles are freeways, with the largest port in the nation spanning 43 miles of oceanfront and the second largest international airport in the country. Highly mobile and approximately 130 miles from the Mexican border, the county is ideally situated for the large-scale trafficking of illegal narcotics. Indeed, the Los Angeles High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, consisting of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, has a total of 290 identified drug trafficking organizations operating within their boundaries.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration's 2017 National Drug Threat Assessment, the Los Angeles Field Division, which covers seven Southern California counties, including Los Angeles, reported a high availability of cocaine, controlled prescription drugs, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine in 2016, which was considered comparable to the previous year's availability. Their survey of law enforcement agencies in the Los Angeles Field Division further indicated that over 60% of agencies considered methamphetamine to be the greatest drug threat and the drug that takes up most of law enforcement resources, while nearly 23% of agencies cited heroin as the greatest threat and over 80% felt heroin was the drug that most contributed to violent crime (National Drug Threat, 2017). These beliefs mirror the trends to be found regarding abuse of illegal drugs in Los Angeles County. A 2013 study found that 19.8% of

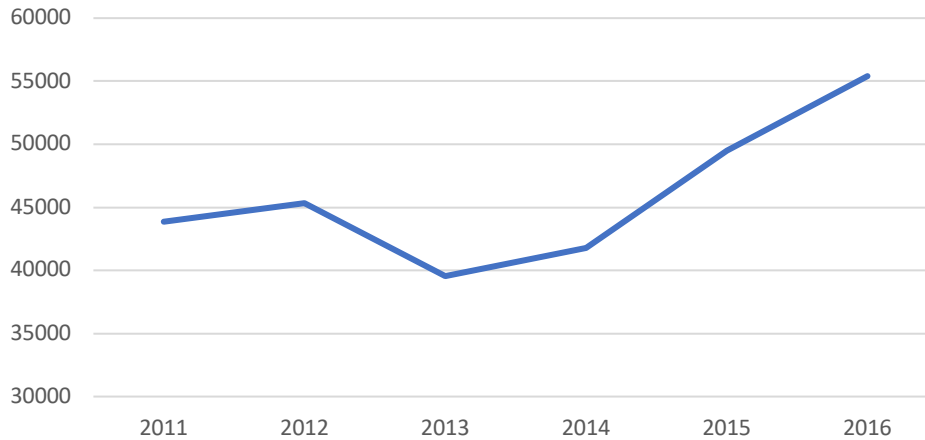
admissions for substance abuse treatment in the county primarily concerned heroin, with methamphetamine as the most common secondary drug of abuse, while 18.8% of admissions were for treatment where methamphetamine was the primary drug (Brecht, 2014).

In an effort to reduce prison overcrowding, Assembly Bill 109 (Public Safety Realignment) was passed by the California Legislature in 2011. This law reduced the California prison population by diverting low-level felony offenders, including some drug offenders, from state prisons to county jails or out-of-custody mandatory supervision. In just two years, between October 2011 and December 2013, the law resulted in a decrease of the prison population of about 25,000 (2011 Public Safety, 2013). Proposition 47, passed by California voters in November 2014, reduced some property and drug possession crimes from felonies to misdemeanors in order to help reduce prison spending on non-serious crimes. While the effect of AB 109 and Proposition 47 on crime rates remains an empirical question yet to be answered, it is clear that as a result of these laws, thousands of prisoners were released back into local communities or shifted to local county jails. This in turn increased overcrowding in the local jails without providing them with the necessary resources to provide services to those with drug addictions or mental illnesses (Jones, 2018).

While California's mentally ill population has risen, options for treatment are not keeping pace (Snibbe, 2017). Without the available resources, the criminal justice system is increasingly forced to fill the gap by arresting and housing mentally ill individuals who would be better served by receiving treatment. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, for example, saw a 55% increase in calls involving mental health issues between 2010 and 2015 (Abram, 2017). Further, the Twin Towers Correctional Facility is widely known as the nation's largest mental health facility. Over the past seven years, the jail's population has increased almost 50% with almost all of the inmates having a mental illness. The facility now houses almost 4,000 mentally ill inmates and Sheriff Jim McDonnell feels this increase is at least partially connected to the abuse of methamphetamine (Balsalmo, 2017). Other law enforcement agencies in Los Angeles County certainly believe this to be true as well. Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck said, "Methamphetamine is something that exacerbates folks that have mental illness issues, and it's a combination that I think is something that we address every day. It's a very cheap, very long-lasting, very cumulative effect drug. It's one that can have a hugely detrimental impact to somebody that deals with mental health issues. I think that it all ties into what we see and impacts what the department has to deal with" (Reynolds, 2017).

Merely speculative at this point is whether or not the factors above have contributed to changes in crime in recent years. If one thing is evident, however, violent and property crimes have risen drastically in Los Angeles County. The figures below display data from the Uniform Crime Report. For the time period of interest here, we consider the crime rates beginning in 2011 when AB 109 was passed. As Figure 1.1 shows, violent crime rates rose 26% between 2011 and 2016, an increase of over 11,000 crimes in a six-year period. However, there was a far more considerable increase from 2014 to 2016, when violent crime rose 33% in just two years.

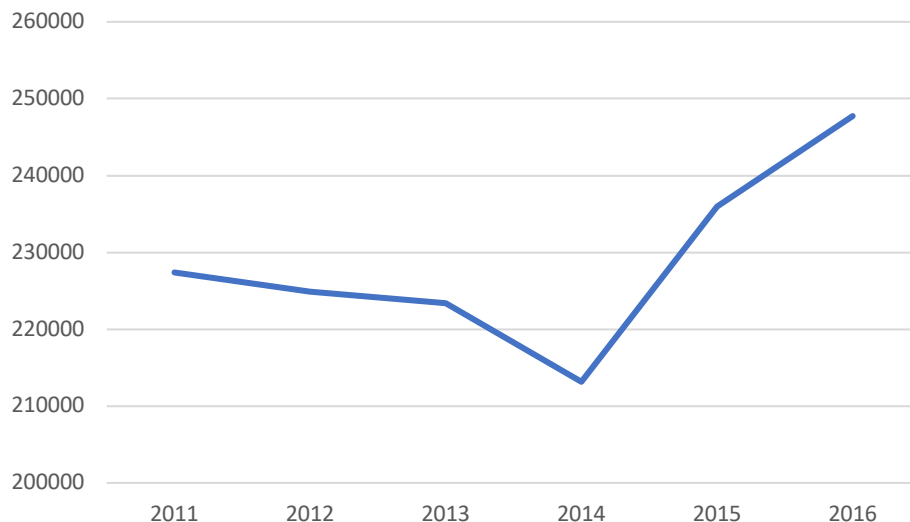
FIGURE 1.1: VIOLENT CRIME IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY



Source: Uniform Crime Reports

A similar if somewhat less dramatic increase was seen for property crime during this same time period (see Figure 1.2). Between 2011 and 2016, property crimes increased by 9% or 20,000 crimes. The increase from 2014 to 2016 was again more substantial, rising 16% over that time period. These rising crime rates, coupled with the needs of vulnerable populations such as at-risk youth and the mentally ill, suggest an even stronger need for a multipronged approach such as DEEP to address the constellation of factors identified here.

FIGURE 1.2: PROPERTY CRIME IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY



Source: Uniform Crime Reports

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the agencies and programs that make up DEEP in order to better understand their operations and assess their productivity as they relate to the various concerns discussed above. While causal attribution is not possible within the parameters of the data that we were supplied, it is possible to speak to the effectiveness of these different entities and explore the components that are critical for their success. Evaluation plans were developed for each of these programs, but as time went on and challenges surfaced as to both obtaining the necessary data in some cases and realizing that the intended data points did not adequately reflect program objectives, our research goals evolved into taking a more holistic approach. This included the decision to look at quantitative data that spanned beyond the grant period to the year 2013 where possible in order to examine the consistency of efforts, as well as the use of qualitative methods to provide greater depth of understanding than simple numbers can achieve.

This report is divided into two parts that represent the key approaches of DEEP. The first concerns evaluation of those programs that fall under the umbrella of enforcement, whether specifically in relation to drug trafficking or other serious crime. This includes the drug and serious crime taskforces L.A. IMPACT and Cal-MET; CHESS of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, responsible for securing wiretaps; TOUGH of the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, which engages in nuisance property abatement; and LA CLEAR, responsible for providing operational and analytical support to law enforcement efforts. The second part consists of evaluation of the programs that facilitate education and prevention. This includes SYF, which provides opportunities for the healthy development of at-risk youth; PD-JMHL, responsible for addressing the needs of mentally ill inmates in county jails; and IOW with its support for the successful reentry of youthful offenders.

Chapter 2: L.A. IMPACT

Program Description

The Los Angeles Interagency Metropolitan Police Apprehension Crime Taskforce (L.A. IMPACT) was conceived of by the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association and established in July 1991. Seeking to coordinate resources throughout Los Angeles County and have a greater impact on major crimes, particularly drug trafficking, countywide, L.A. IMPACT began with officers loaned to the taskforce from different local police agencies. It has expanded to become the largest taskforce in the nation, including agents from both state and federal law enforcement agencies, such as the California Highway Patrol, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Homeland Security Investigations. L.A. IMPACT became a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) in 2011, which allows the partner agencies to not only exercise common powers, but also affords greater opportunity for seeking grant funding specific to the mission of the taskforce. While the JPA membership consists of a total of 47 local, state and federal agencies, this number does not necessarily reflect active participation on the taskforce, with 70% of the JPA agency members and approximately 90 sworn personnel active in 2017.

L.A. IMPACT is overseen by a Special Agent in Charge from the California Department of Justice Bureau Investigation and is organized into multiple groups committed to specialized areas of investigation or that in some way support the taskforce mission, such as the Drug Endangered Children team which navigates removal of and providing services to at-risk children identified through investigations. A special emphasis is placed on targeting mid- to high-level drug trafficking organizations responsible for bringing cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin into the county. In addition to the use of a range of investigative techniques that is highlighted by the development of confidential informants and the use of electronic surveillance, there is also the Allied Laboratory Emergency Response Team (ALERT), which is responsible for dismantling clandestine drug labs. Teams also address gang operations and offender reentry in the county. Besides working with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office on the issue of property abatements (see TOUGH as discussed in Chapter 6 of this report), teams have been created since the passage of AB 109 to ensure ex-offenders are in compliance with the terms of their probation and parole. Drawing on the experience and knowledge of a diverse array of law enforcement officers, L.A. IMPACT is an invaluable tool for responding to the most serious of crime problems and continuing efforts to reduce large scale drug trafficking, as well as its associated crime, in Los Angeles County and beyond.

Methodology

The current evaluation of L.A. IMPACT examines the taskforce's operations and productivity between the years 2013 and 2017. Three sources of data were employed for assessment purposes and are described below.

L.A. IMPACT Statistics: L.A. IMPACT supplied statistics they maintain regarding their operations between 2013 and 2017, including data on investigations initiated, searches conducted (consensual and warrants), and prosecutions initiated. They also provided data on arrests, drug labs that were dismantled, drug trafficking and money laundering organizations in operation, all seizures (drugs, guns, money), and actions undertaken regarding children in conjunction with the Department of Child Family Services.

Annual Reports: The Board of Directors Annual Reports from 2014, 2015, and 2016 were obtained to supplement statistical data with information regarding changes to funding and achievements of the different groups within L.A. IMPACT.

Interviews with Key Personnel: Interviews were conducted with key L.A. IMPACT personnel to provide an overview of the taskforce's mission, as well as provide deeper understanding of the team's operations and context for the statistics provided.

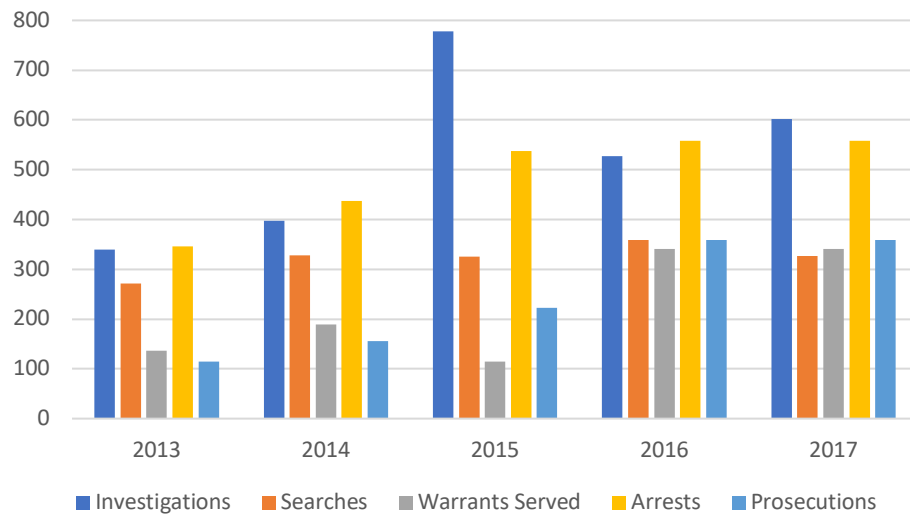
Results

Operations

Between 2013 and 2017, on average over 30 drug trafficking organizations and 10 money laundering organizations were in operation each year in Los Angeles County. Figure 2.1 indicates L.A. IMPACT was consistently productive in investigating and prosecuting these organizations during the grant period, in fact more so than in the two years prior. For the total five year period, the taskforce initiated 2,644 investigations, averaging approximately 44 new investigations each month. The greatest number of investigations (778) were initiated in 2015, when the taskforce on average began almost 65 investigations every month.

There was also a total of 1,927 searches conducted and 1,136 warrants served. On average, L.A. IMPACT was responsible for conducting approximately 32 searches and serving 19 warrants each month. When considering only consensual and warrant searches, they were evenly distributed, with 775 consensual searches conducted versus 781 searches with warrants. These operations ultimately resulted in the arrest of 2,301 suspects, with an average of almost 40 arrests per month. There was also the initiation of 1,142 prosecutions at an average rate of 19 new prosecutions a month. It is important to note that the number of prosecutions has increased rather dramatically from 2013-2015, when prosecutions were initiated at an average of approximately 14 a month, to 2016-2017, when the average monthly rate of prosecutions rose to 27. This increase came about as the result of a new emphasis L.A. IMPACT placed upon not only ensuring investigators were recording this data for statistical tracking purposes, but also in prioritizing the initiation of prosecutions on more "smaller" cases rather than waiting for cases to build.

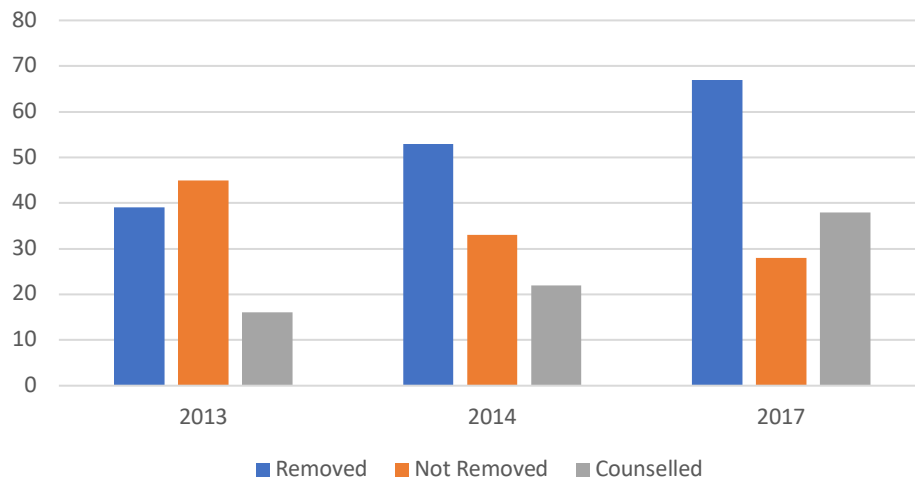
FIGURE 2.1: L.A. IMPACT OPERATIONS 2013-2017



In total, 316 children were referred to the Department of Children and Family Services as a result of L.A. IMPACT operations in the past five years, with on average approximately 5 children referred each month. Typically referrals will result in the removal of children from their families because of the exigent nature of their living conditions, such as the fact that a parent is involved in either the sale or distribution of illegal narcotics, the presence of loaded weapons in the home, or the presence of drug labs. Less frequently, children will not be removed from their families if the circumstances do not warrant removal or they were not present when L.A. IMPACT investigators were at the location. In these cases, the family will be provided whatever services are deemed necessary, such as counselling or medical attention.

Data was not available for 2015-2016 regarding whether children had been removed from their families or received counselling. But the data available, as shown in Figure 2.2 below, indicates the number of children being removed from their families in relation to the taskforce's efforts against drug trafficking has steadily increased. In 2013, 3.3 children were removed on average each month; that number had increased to an average of 5.6 children by 2017. So, too, has the number of children being counselled, increasing from just over 1.3 children counselled on average a month in 2013 to 3.2 children in 2017. Clearly the needs of the children whose families are engaged in drug trafficking at any level will always remain a concern, making the Drug Endangered Children team vital to the overall work of L.A. IMPACT.

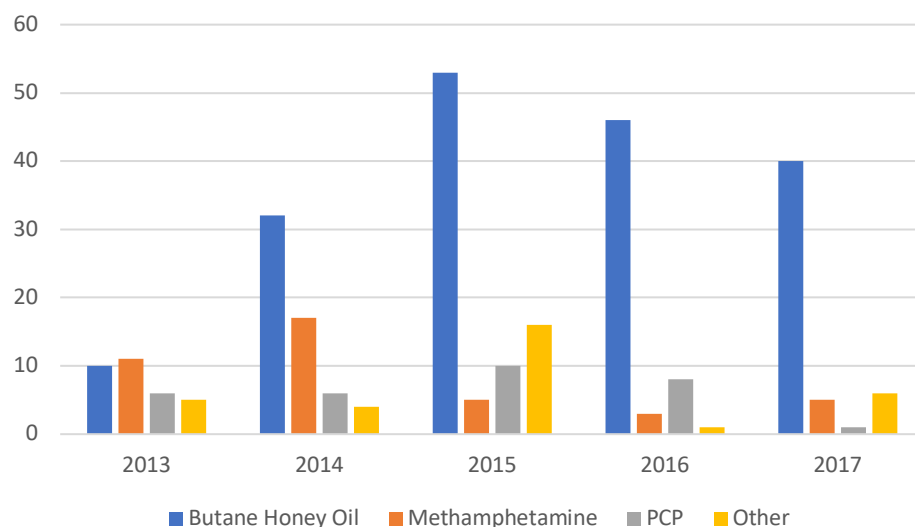
FIGURE 2.2: DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN 2013, 2014, 2017



Drug Labs Dismantled

The ALERT team was responsible for dismantling 285 drug labs in Los Angeles County, on average dismantling approximately five labs each month (see Figure 2.3). Indeed, in the 60 month period covered here, there was not a single month in which the team did not dismantle at least one lab. Butane hash or honey oil (BHO) labs involve the extraction of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) from marijuana with the use of butane, which is highly volatile. In the attempt to dissipate the butane, burners or open flames of some kind must be used, which often result in fires and explosions. BHO labs were the type most commonly dismantled, comprising 64% of all labs dismantled.

FIGURE 2.3: DISMANTLED DRUG LABS BY TYPE



Labs for producing Phencyclidine (PCP) and methamphetamine made up 25% of labs dismantled, while the remaining labs concerned the production of other drugs such as Dimethyltryptamine

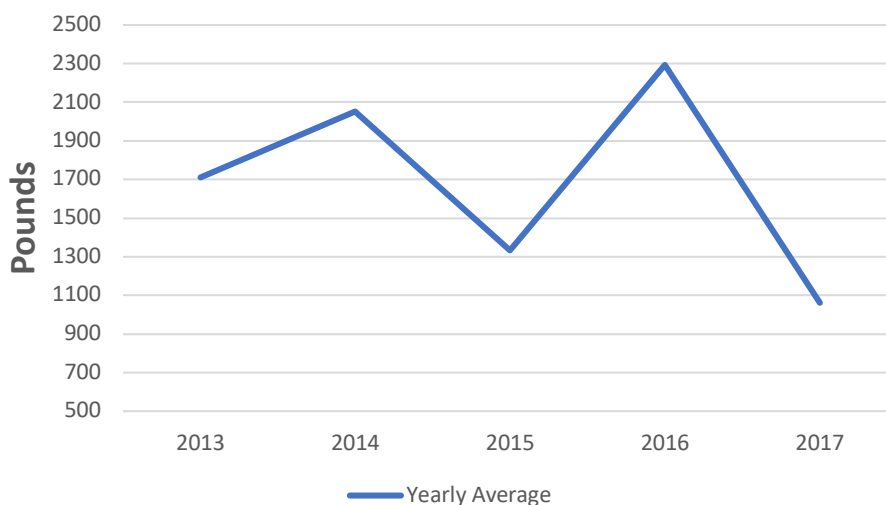
(DMT), Gamma-Hydroxybutyric (GHB), Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), and steroids.

These numbers represent a transition being experienced in Los Angeles County as to the types of drug labs that were most prevalent. Methamphetamine “icing” labs were much more prevalent up to 2013. Such labs are essentially used to dilute methamphetamine in a liquid to “ice it out” or use chemical synthesis to obtain solid methamphetamine. Because methamphetamine is less detectable when it is in liquid form, this was the preferred way to transport the drug into the country, hence the prevalence of “icing” labs in the county. However, the market became flooded and the price of meth dropped significantly, from \$10,000 to \$2,000 a pound; it became cheaper to simply do the icing process in Mexico and transport the drug to the U.S. There has also been the rise of BHO labs as social marijuana use became more prevalent; extraction of TCH, the compound responsible for creating the “high” users feel, allows for a more potent high and greater profit. Regardless of the trends in *types* of labs, the ALERT team remains in high demand, with approximately 60-80 drug labs reported to L.A. IMPACT each year.

Drug Seizures

In total, L.A. IMPACT seized 101,382 pounds of illegal narcotics within Los Angeles County between 2013 and 2017. On average, the taskforce was responsible for seizing 1,690 pounds of drugs each month during this time period. As Figure 2.4 indicates, the greatest amount of drugs was seized in 2016, when over 27, 000 pounds were seized at an average monthly rate of nearly 2,300 pounds. Seizure rates for 2014 were comparable, with over 24,000 pounds of drugs seized and an average monthly rate of approximately 2,000 pounds.

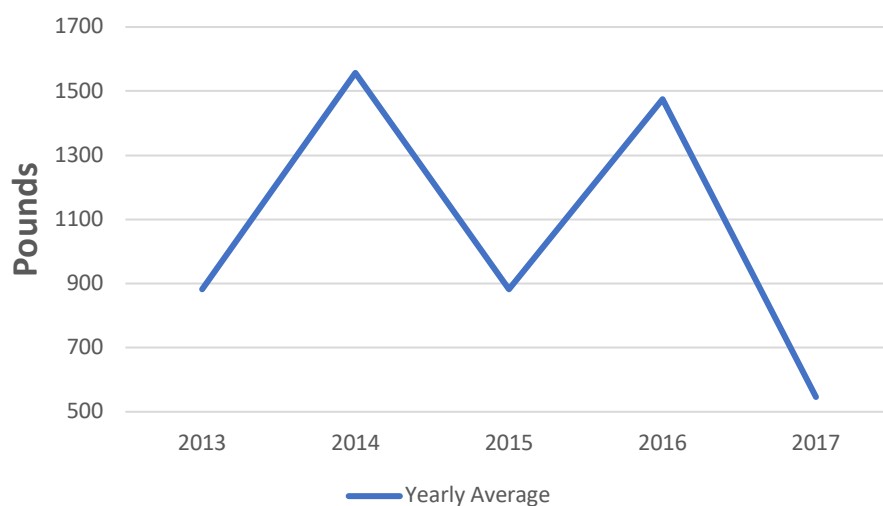
FIGURE 2.4: DRUGS SEIZED 2013-2017



Rates for seizures declined dramatically in 2017 when just over 12,700 pounds were seized that year and each month the average total seizure was 1,061 pounds. Changes in the total amount

of drugs seized over the years can largely be attributed to the amounts of marijuana seized in a given year. Of all drugs seized, 63% was marijuana, with the taskforce seizing over 64,000 pounds between 2013 and 2017, and, on average, seizing over 1,000 pounds each month. As Figure 2.5 shows, the peak years for seizures of marijuana were 2014 and 2016, with a steep decline in such seizures in 2017. These trends are in part due to rather large quantities of marijuana being seized during the peak years. In 2014, marijuana seizures totaled 18,684 pounds, with two months in which seizures totaling over 7,000 pounds each were made. In 2016, 17,703 pounds of marijuana were seized, including seizures amounting to over 8,400 pounds made in two months. For 2017, however, only 6,553 pounds were seized.

FIGURE 2.5: MARIJUANA SEIZED 2013-2017

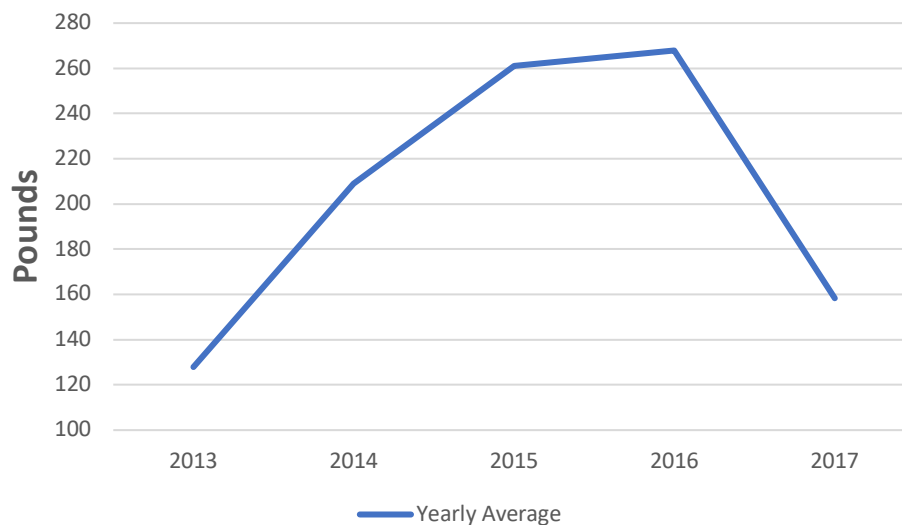


Methamphetamine represented approximately 14% of all drugs seized between 2013 and 2017, with an average of 234 pounds seized by the taskforce each month. Seizures primarily consisted of methamphetamine ice, which is the crystalized and more potent form of methamphetamine. Of 14,024 pounds seized, 95% was meth ice versus 5% powder form. There were also 1,099 liters (approximately 290 gallons) of meth solution seized during this time. As Table 2.1 suggests, methamphetamine remains very much in demand and L.A. IMPACT has not only consistently seized large quantities both before and during the grant years, but seizures were more sizeable in the past two years, with over 300 pounds of meth seized in 11 of the 24 months.

TABLE 2.1: METHAMPHETAMINE SEIZED 2013-2017

	Meth Ice (Pounds)	Meth Powder (Pounds)	Meth Solution (Liters)
2013	2035	8	128
2014	2142	170	605
2015	2353	185	23
2016	3558	191	38
2017	3159	223	306
Total	13,247	777	1099
Monthly Average	221	13	18

Another 12% of all drugs seized was cocaine, with an average of just over 200 pounds being seized on a monthly basis and 12,205 pounds being seized in total. As with methamphetamine, there was not a month in the five year period between 2013 and 2017 in which the taskforce did not seize some quantity of cocaine. Cocaine powder was most commonly seized, representing 99.9% of the cocaine seized; less than eight pounds of cocaine rocks or “crack” were also seized. As Figure 2.6 indicates, there was a considerable decrease in the amount of cocaine seized in 2017; while over 3,000 pounds of cocaine were seized in 2015 and 2016, less than 2,000 pounds were seized in 2017 and the average monthly rate dropped by 100 pounds.

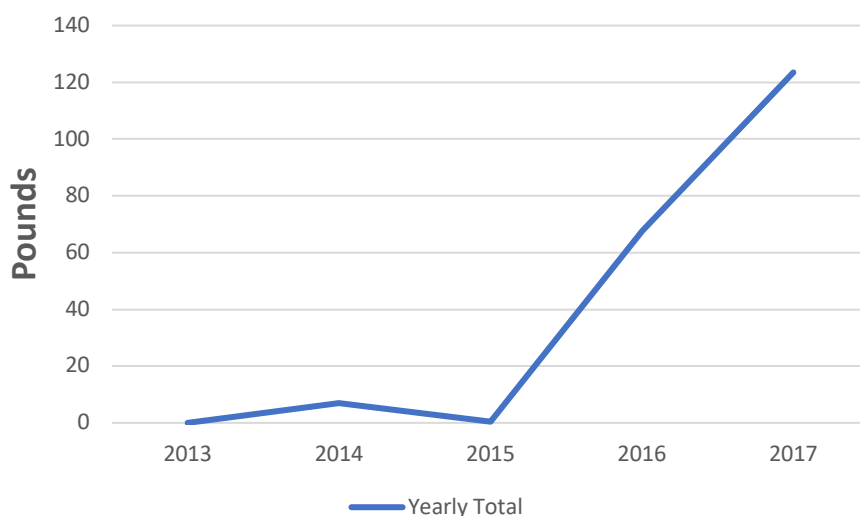
FIGURE 2.6: COCAINE SEIZED 2013-2017

The remaining 10% of drugs seized represented a wide variety of illicit narcotics or prescription drugs. Close to 2% of all drugs seized were heroin powder and tar, with 1,871 pounds seized in all and an average of 31 pounds seized each month in the past five years. Over 1,000 pounds of hashish were also seized, representing another 1% of the total amount of drugs seized. Overall, the equivalent to approximately 117 gallons of PCP were seized, as well as over 161,000 pills, including Ecstasy, Hydrocodone, Oxycodone, and Xanax. While the amount of hashish and pills

seized in 2017 increased from the previous year, it should be noted that seizures of heroin and PCP greatly *decreased* that year. Heroin seizures averaged approximately 19 pounds each month in 2017, compared to an average of 31 pounds in 2016. A little over 2 gallons of PCP was seized in all of 2017, while over 12 gallons were seized in 2016.

Perhaps most disquieting has been the taskforce's increasing seizures of the opioid fentanyl. In 2013, L.A. IMPACT did not report a single seizure of fentanyl, despite having seized over 20,500 pounds of drugs throughout the county that year. In 2017, over 120 pounds had been seized. As the Figure 2.7 indicates, drug trafficking organizations operating in Los Angeles County are obviously beginning to focus their attention on the distribution of fentanyl.

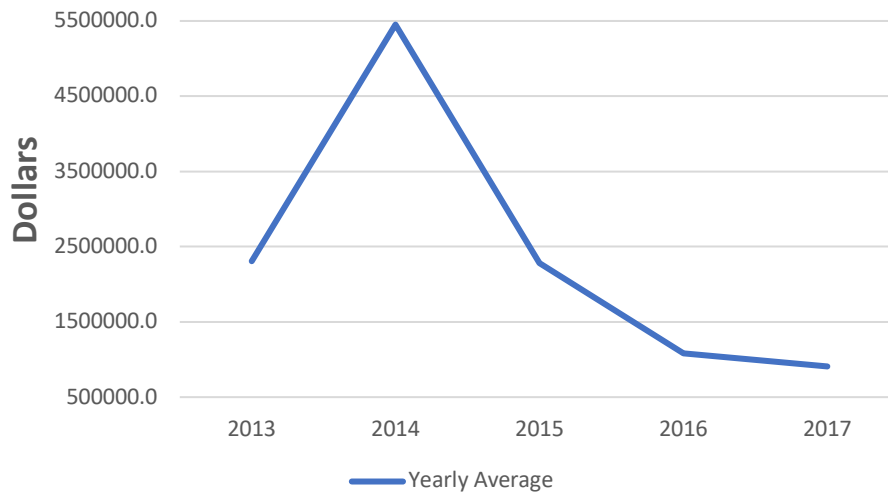
FIGURE 2.7: FENTANYL SEIZED 2013-2017



Money Asset Seizures

Between 2013 and 2017, L.A. IMPACT was also responsible for the seizure of \$144,360,889 related to drug trafficking in Los Angeles County, with an average of \$2,406,015 seized each month. As Figure 2.8 shows, 2014 saw the greatest amount of money seized, totaling \$65,420,988. This amount includes money seized as part of Operation Cash Cow, a long-term investigation that included partnering with Homeland Security Investigations and Internal Revenue Service. Ending in September 2014, this operation against a large-scale money laundering operation in the Los Angeles Garment District yielded L.A. IMPACT a seizure of approximately \$36,000,000. Beyond the Cash Cow seizure, rates of seizures were comparable between 2013 and 2015; each year over twenty-seven million dollars was seized. A noticeable decrease in seizures is evident for 2016 and 2017. In 2016, over \$13,000,000 was seized, with an average monthly seizure rate of \$1,086,148. In 2017, the yearly total dropped to under \$11,000,000, with the average monthly rate dropping below one million dollars.

FIGURE 2.8: MONEY SEIZED 2013-2017



Understanding the Numbers

L.A. IMPACT's operations during the grant years have shown consistency as it pertains to search operations, arrests, and initiating prosecutions. The data supports that the work of the ALERT and Drug Endangered Children teams remains a critical component of L.A. IMPACT's efforts against drug trafficking organizations in Los Angeles County. The nature of drug interdiction makes it inevitable that there can be no absolute guarantees as to the amount of drugs that will be seized after a long-term investigation of a drug trafficking organization. Examination of drug and money seizures, however, show serious declines in seizures by the taskforce in 2017 that cannot simply be attributed to larger than normal seizures in the preceding years. Several key factors must be considered in order to understand this decline, primarily the role of decreased funding that has begun to make a noticeable impact on the investigative capabilities of L.A. IMPACT.

Cuts in Funding: That decreased funding has affected the taskforce's productivity most certainly seems to be supported by the data on the drug seizures made by the taskforce both before and during the grant period. For example, funding received from the JAG grant has continually declined, specifically decreasing from \$736,305 in fiscal year 2013-14 to \$106,188 in 2014-2015. In March 2017, the need to prioritize resources led to the decision to make significant cuts to funding in two areas. The first was a decrease by 25% in the funding for providing overtime pay to investigators. This had a negative impact on two fronts. First, the nature of working drug trafficking cases is that of working long hours in order to maintain the necessary surveillance and gather necessary intelligence; this inevitably makes overtime crucial to the success of these investigations. Cuts to overtime pay unquestionably limited the scope of investigations that were possible. It also led to a reduction in the number of out of county operations that L.A. IMPACT could participate in, further contributing to a reduction in seizures the taskforce made and a lessened benefit to Southern California as a whole. Second, this also had the unintended

consequence of dampening the enthusiasm of the investigators, for whom receiving overtime was sometimes taken for granted.

The second change to funding was the decrease of funding for informant payments, also by 25%, in 2017. The investigative techniques employed by L.A. IMPACT has evolved over time, moving from more traditional methods of surveillance to embrace electronic surveillance which has resulted in more expansive investigations. Confidential informants, however, still remain key to the infiltration of large scale networks bringing illegal narcotics into Southern California and identifying the source of those drugs. Rarely are such informants motivated by altruistic concerns, seeking some benefit to themselves. While this may involve the informant seeking to make a deal once he has been arrested, often times it entails the use of monetary awards as inducement. With less funding available for such awards, the taskforce's ability to make use of informants became somewhat limited as informants turned to other law enforcement agencies with more money at their disposal to pay for their services.

New Limitations on Asset Forfeitures: Asset forfeitures that result from operations targeting drug trafficking organizations remain a vital source of funds as grant funding alone is insufficient to cover the operating costs of L.A. IMPACT. The majority of these funds are typically given to the participating agencies, but they are also critical for financing informants, overtime, and equipment. The ability of law enforcement agencies to avail themselves of funds derived from asset forfeitures, however, has been limited at both the federal and state level in recent years. In 2015, the federal government greatly restricted state and local law enforcement agencies' ability to receive proceeds from seized assets at the federal level. In January 2017, Senate Bill 443 went into effect in California, requiring a criminal conviction before law enforcement agencies can permanently seize assets valued at less than \$40,000 where previously, the seizure threshold had been \$25,000. These restrictions, coupled with cuts to grant funding, have unquestionably contributed to the need to conserve resources and hampered the scope of investigations L.A. IMPACT can undertake.

De-Emphasis on Marijuana Interdiction: The dramatic decrease of marijuana seizures in 2017 can be attributed to two things. The first has already been touched upon above, which is the decrease in the personnel and overtime that are currently available to L.A. IMPACT. This of course has dictated making the most effective use of the resources available. A shifting away from marijuana trafficking also made sense given the change in the legal landscape that occurred when California voted to legalize recreational marijuana in 2016 with the passage of Proposition 64. Although the actual ability to purchase recreational marijuana did not become a reality until January 2018, this legal change informed the decision to refocus taskforce operations that were never intended to exclusively focus on marijuana to begin with. This de-emphasis on marijuana interdiction can also help to explain the decline in drug seizures overall. Mid- to high-level drug traffickers typically tend to deal in more than one type of narcotic. With the taskforce redirecting investigative efforts away from cases in which the primary or known drug trafficking concerned marijuana, obviously other drugs that such traffickers were also handling would likewise not be seized, effectively contributing to the lowering the rate of overall seizures.

Changing Trends and Teams: Previously noted, L.A. IMPACT began to emphasize having more prosecutions initiated. The previous mindset was to “build a bigger case”, seeking to build on intelligence from informants and surveillance in order to reach the highest level possible within a drug trafficking organization before filing criminal charges. Ostensibly, informants and targeted suspects would sometimes become “lost,” particularly given the proximity to Mexico and the ability for individuals to flee. In deciding to move ahead with filing charges against more lower-level individuals, less money was uncovered and drug trafficking organizations responded to this pressure by changing their money laundering methods. In particular, there has been a sizeable reduction in the amount of money and drugs being transported via packages as organizations shifted to other package transportation hubs away from Los Angeles County. This trend resulted in the dismantling of the Parcels Team as need decreased.

One Surveillance Team was also suspended during this time. This team consisted of a narcotics team supplied to the taskforce by the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department in 2013. As the department sought to streamline its approach to narcotics and address its own funding issues, it recalled this team back to the department in 2017, which further contributed to the declining number of narcotics seizures made in 2017. Narcotics enforcement efforts were also possibly further impacted by the creation in May 2017 of the Crime Impact Team in response to concerns of police chiefs in San Gabriel Valley to the specific crime problem of “flocking” or “knock-knock burglaries” in which offenders knock on the door of residences and, if no one answers, break in to burglarize the home. Devoted to property crimes, this team did require the shifting of some resources away from narcotics investigations that might have contributed to the decreased seizures noted for 2017.

Beyond the Numbers: Communities, Drug Traffickers, and the Law Enforcement Community

The importance of the work that L.A. IMPACT undertakes is perhaps best reflected in achieving the goal of preventing thousands of pounds of illegal narcotics from reaching the communities in Los Angeles County. The “minimum effective dose” of a drug is the lowest amount considered necessary to provide users with the desired effect, although a tolerance to drugs after repeated use and other physiological factors may see variation of a drug’s effect on individuals. The minimum effective dose for cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine is considered to be .02 grams, with a rate of .03 grams for marijuana. With 453.59237 grams in a pound, a single pound of cocaine, heroin or methamphetamine will provide approximately 22,680 minimum effective doses, while one pound of marijuana will yield 15, 120 doses.

Between 2013 and 2017, L.A. IMPACT seized a combined total of 91,710 pounds of cocaine, heroin powder, marijuana and methamphetamine. In all, this represents a total of 1,595,288,486 minimum effective doses that the taskforce prevented from being distributed in Los Angeles County communities. This amounts to an average of 26,588,141 doses of these drugs being kept off the streets each month. The amounts of minimum effective doses seized each year are shown in Table 2.2. Ultimately, L.A. IMPACT seized the equivalent of 276,641,350 doses of cocaine, 31,276,785 doses of heroin, 969,319,690 doses of marijuana, and 318,050,661 doses of methamphetamine in the five year period covered here.

TABLE 2.2: MINIMUM EFFECTIVE DOSES SEIZED 2013-2017

Year	Pounds Seized	Minimum Doses
2013	14,196	242,020,422
2014	23,922	401,287,661
2015	16,703	298,722,572
2016	24,912	431,158,533
2017	11,977	222,099,298
Total	91,710	1,595,288,486
Monthly Average	1,529	26,588,141

Such large-scale seizures also deprive drug trafficking organizations of the profit they might have realized from the sale of these drugs. The street value of these drugs is set by HIDTA, with methamphetamine having a value of \$40 a gram, cocaine \$50 a gram, and heroin powder \$90 a gram. As Table 2.3 shows, L.A. IMPACT seized a total of 27,601 pounds of cocaine, heroin powder and methamphetamine between 2013 and 2017, which had a total street value of \$587,380,091. On average, the taskforce was responsible for depriving drug trafficking organizations of 9,789,668 dollars' worth of profits each month. In total, L.A. IMPACT seized \$276,641,350 worth of cocaine, \$56,298,213, and \$254,440,528 worth of methamphetamine.

TABLE 2.3: STREET VALUE OF DRUGS SEIZED 2013-2017

Year	Pounds Seized	Street Value (\$)
2013	3622	73,679,001
2014	5237	115,881,153
2015	6109	136,491,067
2016	7209	151,030,963
2017	5424	110,297,908
Total	27,601	587,380,091
Monthly Average	460	9,789,668

L.A. IMPACT not only serves a direct benefit to communities when they prevent the distribution of illicit narcotics and deny drug trafficking organizations sizeable profits, but they also benefit all law enforcement agencies in Los Angeles County. The success of L.A. IMPACT clearly rests upon a foundation of the diverse experience brought by officers from different partner agencies to the taskforce. But the experience and knowledge that officers gain while working on the taskforce is invaluable and local agencies can only benefit from this once the officers have returned to their own agencies. L.A. IMPACT is performing a very vital function within Los Angeles County that no agency alone can tackle, targeting not just the drug trafficking that plagues the county, but also associated crimes such as money laundering and human trafficking, issues that smaller agencies within the county are simply not equipped to address. The ability to mobilize dozens of officers into a geographical area or investigation to assist a partner agency within a couple of hours'

notice is a priceless asset for the county. As one L.A. IMPACT team member said, “If a police chief calls us in on an issue or major incident, we won’t ever turn them down.”

Challenges facing L.A. IMPACT

L.A. IMPACT has made itself a critical part of the approach to address serious crime in Los Angeles County, particularly in targeting drug trafficking and money laundering operations, despite facing multiple challenges that are unmistakably encroaching upon the ability of the taskforce to maintain its full potential.

Funding: Clearly receiving sufficient funding to maintain a stronghold of investigative efforts in Los Angeles County is, as one L.A. IMPACT member stated, “the number one threat to L.A. IMPACT.” As previously noted, decreased funding from both grants and asset forfeitures have resulted in decreased productivity in 2017 as the taskforce struggles to conduct what are inevitably intensive investigations while making do with less overtime and less money to induce informants to share intelligence that is vital to infiltrating criminal organizations. L.A. IMPACT recognizes the need to rely less on asset forfeiture and more on grant funding so they are not “constantly focused on survival,” but JAG funding has steadily decreased and only compounded the urgency of having to continually seek out new grant opportunities. The drastic decreases the data show for 2017 indicate what cuts in funding not only mean for the taskforce as to the number and scope of investigations it can engage in, but for the communities of Los Angeles County in terms of the amount of illegal narcotics they will be exposed to.

Inconsistent Participation by Partner Agencies: L.A. IMPACT relies on its partner agencies to provide personnel, but only 70% of the agencies have officers actively participating in the taskforce, which has particularly hampered L.A. IMPACT’s ability to engage in more investigations from around the middle of 2016 to the present day. Inevitably smaller local agencies suffer their own personnel shortages and budget concerns that can cause “the loss” of even one officer to the taskforce to detrimentally impact their ability to fill basic assignments, such as patrol shifts. Partner agencies will also unavoidably see regular changes in chiefs and organizational priorities that make it a constant challenge for L.A. IMPACT to maintain sufficient levels of personnel from local agencies. It is equally difficult to maintain active participation on the part of federal agencies as well owing to the same problems of limited resources and lack of manpower. L.A. IMPACT would greatly benefit from having partner agencies provide personnel with a wider range of expertise, such as electronics and financial crimes, as well as other necessary areas, such as forensics.

Money Laundering Expertise: There is a very real need for a dedicated focus on money laundering operations in Los Angeles County and, as with the ALERT Team and clandestine drug labs, L.A. IMPACT is the most logical vehicle for achieving that. Funding secured from the South West Border Anti-Money Laundering Alliance allowed for the creation of the SWIFT Team. Previously lacking the expertise to investigate the large scale money-laundering operations that parallel drug trafficking operations, SWIFT allowed the taskforce unprecedented ability to engage in such financial investigations that resulted in the vastly successful Operation Cash Cow. This

funding was depleted in 2017 and, once again, limited the ability of L.A. IMPACT to target such money laundering operations, something that remains crucial to the long-term effectiveness of drug interdiction efforts. Without the proper resources to fully dismantle these operations, the money that sustains drug trafficking operations will simply allow them to continue and drug enforcement itself remains only a partial victory.

Technological Advances: As the technological sophistication of drug trafficking organizations increases, so grows the need for law enforcement to keep pace with technological advances. The reliance of organizations on electronic devices means that there is a wealth of intelligence to be gained regarding drug traffickers' movements and communications. L.A. IMPACT recognizes electronic surveillance is a key to their success and uses a wide array of techniques, but keeping up with technological advances remains a challenge, particularly when so few in law enforcement have training in and experience with technology. Law enforcement does tend to experience what has been called a "cultural lag" (Lovell, 2003) when it comes to use of technology, generally falling behind society in exploiting technology for its own advantage. But law enforcement also typically cannot match the financial resources of traffickers to avail themselves of the newest technology. As technology advances, the number of legal challenges also rise as the courts navigate the heretofore unconsidered potential of electronic surveillance techniques that law enforcement must keep abreast of. To have a team dedicated to these issues of technology would definitely impact not only prosecutions, but also ensure L.A. IMPACT operations are in strict compliance with the latest court rulings.

Fentanyl vs. Other Drugs: L.A. IMPACT seized over 120 pounds of the synthetic opioid fentanyl in 2017, nearly double the amount the taskforce seized in 2016. It is evident that drug trafficking organizations operating in Southern California are transitioning into handling this highly profitable drug. It is also a highly potent and lethal drug, both to users and others who come in contact with the drug, such as law enforcement. While L.A. IMPACT monitors how the opioid epidemic has ravaged other parts of the country as fentanyl continues to make its way west, it seems inevitable that it will be contending with the drug on a greater scale as time goes on. But it must be noted L.A. IMPACT considers the number one drug problem facing the county remains methamphetamine, as the consistently high amounts of the drug seized in 2016 and 2017 seem to attest to. And, while the taskforce has decreased emphasis on targeting marijuana, there is every reason to believe that this de-emphasis will not be permanent. The legalization of recreational marijuana means the generation of revenue through taxes on a legal commodity by the government and profits made by legal marijuana dispensaries would be undercut by the illicit marijuana trade; it seems likely there will be renewed attention paid to the illegal trade and calls for law enforcement to step up its enforcement. Ultimately, fentanyl, while undoubtedly a more lethal drug, will be a competing concern for the other concerns L.A. IMPACT will need to contend with.

Summary and Conclusions

Between 2013 and 2017, L.A. IMPACT persevered in its drug interdiction efforts, although there was a steep decline in productivity in 2017. During this period the taskforce seized 101, 382 pounds of illegal drugs, dismantled 285 clandestine drug labs and secured the arrests of 2,301 suspects, leading to the initiation of 1, 142 prosecutions related to drug trafficking organizations. Their operations not only benefited the community by preventing over one and a half billion doses of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine from reaching communities in Los Angeles County, but denied drug trafficking organization over half a billion dollars in profit. In this 60 month period, L.A. IMPACT on average was responsible each month for seizing nearly 1,700 pounds of narcotics, dismantling five drug labs, and arresting 40 individuals; this in turn resulted in over 26 million doses of drugs from reaching communities and kept nearly 10 million dollars in profits from drug traffickers on a monthly basis.

That 2017 saw such precipitous drops in drug seizures can largely be attributed to the loss of funding from grants and asset forfeitures, which have hampered L.A. IMPACT's ability to engage as fully in drug interdiction as it has done in previous years. This has dictated the redistribution of resources away from overtime funding and payment to informants, which has undoubtedly been the basis of the substantially lower numbers we see for 2017. The passage of Proposition 64 and legalization of recreational marijuana have also meant a shift in L.A. IMPACT policy, moving away from marijuana interdiction to concentrate on harder drugs. This move makes all the more sense when we consider the limited resources the taskforce is working with that not only include less funding, but also less manpower as partner agencies struggle with their own budgetary shortfalls and recall officers assigned to L.A. IMPACT. Changes in policy on filing criminal charges have increased the number of prosecutions initiated through going after more lower-level drug traffickers, but it has also meant that drug trafficking organizations have felt the pressure and altered their money laundering operations and moved to transporting money and drugs via postal services away from Los Angeles County. Trying to maintain its currency with less funding proved a cautionary tale in 2017 of millions of doses that might have been prevented from reaching the communities in and around Los Angeles County, as well as the millions of dollars of profit drug trafficking organizations could have been deprived of if sufficient funding was available to sustain their investigative efforts at a higher level.

Funding and personnel remain the greatest challenges that L.A. IMPACT face, which make the other challenges they face now and will face in the future all the more daunting. Drug trafficking organizations are built on millions, if not billions, of dollars, a flow of money that allows their capacity for technology to far outpace that of law enforcement and further allows them to maintain their drug and money laundering operations year after year. Methamphetamine remains the primary concern for L.A. IMPACT, although the legalized marijuana market will no doubt see increasing demands on taskforces such as L.A. IMPACT to target the illegal marijuana trade and there is the additional pressure of increasing fentanyl seizures that indicate the opioid epidemic is finding its way to Southern California. The large scale distribution of illegal narcotics will ever remain a concern for the taskforce, particularly without the ability to dedicate itself to bringing down the large money laundering operations that sustain this distribution. The

development of the Crime Impact Team, however, is a reminder that L.A. IMPACT remains a unique and invaluable resource to the law enforcement agencies of Los Angeles County, meant to address the serious crimes that partner agencies deem most problematic that span beyond narcotics and cannot address on their own.

Securing the necessary funding to be able to operate at a greater capacity in terms of contributing the full strength of its investigative abilities to the drug interdiction efforts taking place in the county is imperative. There is also the need for L.A. IMPACT to develop the infrastructure that will allow it to more easily access the data it collects regarding its operations. While the determination of which data points were important to and would be provided for the purposes of this evaluation was primarily made by L.A. IMPACT personnel, there was apparently no easy method for extracting these data points. In the quest to secure the additional funding it so sorely needs, synthesizing data that can highlight more particulars of the taskforce's operations and achievements than the broadest categories will be key. L.A. IMPACT will certainly need to consider adopting a data system that will allow for retrieval of its data requiring more easily and in a timelier manner, another consideration that will require sufficient funding.

Chapter 3: Cal-MMET

Program Description

The California Multi-Jurisdictional Methamphetamine Enforcement Team (Cal-MMET) was first established in 2001 by the Office of the Governor, intended to provide a concentrated law enforcement approach to address the production and distribution of methamphetamine in California. Originally located in Northern California, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department was awarded a state grant to establish a Cal-MMET task force in November 2006. Cal-MMET is essentially a narcotics enforcement team that focuses on and targets mid- to upper-level drug trafficking both within and without Los Angeles County. The team is comprised of ten Sheriff's investigators who are Bonus 2 Detectives. While Bonus 1 Detectives are typically working with street-level narcotics, such as local drug houses, Bonus 2 Detectives are more experienced investigators that work on major narcotic taskforces, such as Cal-MMET and L.A. IMPACT. Through the years, police officers from local agencies, such as the Culver City and Glendale Police Departments, have been assigned to Cal-MMET as well; at the time of this report, however, no local agencies were currently participating in Cal-MMET.

Cal-MMET partners with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, as well as other regional narcotics taskforces, providing considerable investigative support to drug interdiction efforts in Southern California. Partners have included countywide teams for Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, California Highway Patrol, Drug Enforcement Administration, Homeland Security Investigations, and Border Patrol. Cal-MMET is essentially the "boots on the ground" for partner investigations, engaging in surveillance, particularly for wiretap investigations, to provide intelligence regarding individuals who are responsible for organizing, financing, and engaging in mid- to high-level trafficking, distribution and manufacturing of illegal narcotics, and serve search warrants. A wide range of investigative techniques are employed, including in-person surveillance and intelligence gathering, undercover operations, reverse strings, and surveillance through cameras and tracking devices. Ultimately, Cal-MMET is a critical component of the much broader strategy for reducing all drug trafficking in Southern California.

Methodology

The current evaluation of Cal-MMET seeks to examine the taskforce's productivity and operations between the years 2013 and 2017. Two primary sources of data were relied on for assessment purposes and are described below.

Cal-MMET Statistics: Cal-MMET supplied statistics as they related to both drug-related seizures and other relevant operational features. Data included the amount of cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine that had been seized on a monthly basis for each year between 2013 and 2017, as well as the amount of money, vehicles and weapons seized.

Operational statistics included the number of search warrant and consent search operations undertaken, informant-generated operations and seizures, and number of children removed from targeted locations.

Interviews with Key Personnel: Interviews were conducted with key Cal-MMET personnel to provide an overview of the taskforce's mission, as well as provide deeper understanding of the team's operations and context for the statistics provided.

It is important to note that evaluating the contributions of Cal-MMET to the efforts against drug trafficking in Los Angeles County cannot and will never be fully realized if one is forced to rely solely on their official statistics. Given that their investigative and enforcement roles are done at the behest of other agencies, their work does not necessarily result in Cal-MMET members ultimately being the party responsible for seizing the illegal narcotics or arresting those in drug trafficking that they are targeting. In those cases where another agency uses the intelligence or other work of the team to make seizures or arrests, Cal-MMET does not receive official statistical credit. To this end, the data provided here is limited to only those seizures and arrests in which Cal-MMET directly participated.

Results

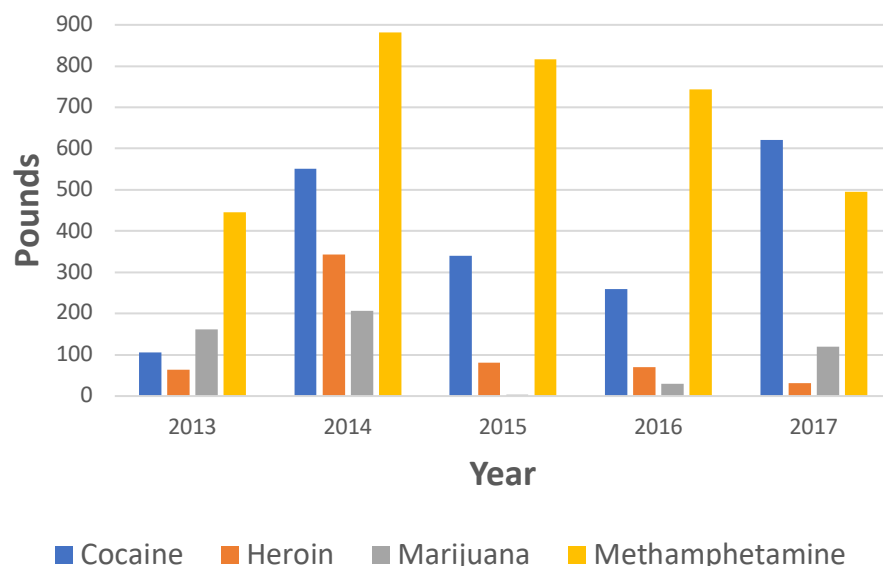
Operations and Seizures

Cal-MMET was highly productive between the years 2013 and 2017. The taskforce engaged in 65 search warrant operations in all, averaging about one warrant operation a month. Additionally, 38 consensual search operations were engaged in during this time. Confidential informants played a decidedly key role in helping to identify narcotics organizations and the individuals involved in them; intelligence derived from informants was the basis for 79 search operations and seizures. Overall, Cal-MMET operations resulted in the arrests of 401 individuals connected to drug trafficking over the five year period, with an average of approximately seven arrests occurring each month. Cal-MMET also seized \$12,666,061 in money related to drug trafficking in Los Angeles County, as well as 60 vehicles. Over the five year period, 82 weapons were seized; this included a variety of handguns, rifles, shotguns, and assault rifles. In the course of these operations, 39 children were removed from the targeted locations, although Cal-MMET has noted that less children tend to be present at locations involving the processing, storage, and distribution of drugs in more recent times. They speculate that this may be due to the recognition on the part of drug traffickers that there are more serious repercussions for themselves when children are present around such operations.

Between 2013 and 2017, Cal-MMET was responsible for seizing a total of 6,370 pounds of illegal drugs, on average seizing approximately 106 pounds each month. In fact, there was only a single month (June 2014) during the entire 60 month period when the taskforce did not seize any quantity of cocaine, heroin, marijuana or methamphetamine. However, it should be noted that in the following month, the taskforce seized its greatest total amount of drugs for any one month

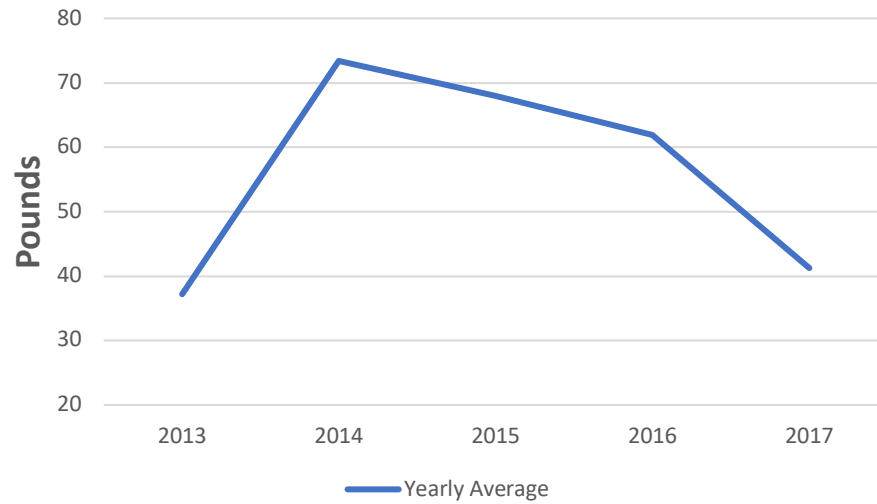
(393 pounds). As Figure 3.1 indicates and consistent with the primary mission of Cal-MMET, 53% of the total amount of drugs was methamphetamine, with 3,381 pounds seized. Another 30% of drugs seized was cocaine, at 1,878 pounds. Somewhat more heroin was seized than marijuana, with 591 pounds seized versus 520 pounds of marijuana. It should further be noted that in October 2017 Cal-MMET seized 22 pounds of the synthetic opioid fentanyl for the first time, suggesting that the opioid crisis is indeed growing in Southern California.

FIGURE 3.1: DRUGS SEIZED 2013-2017



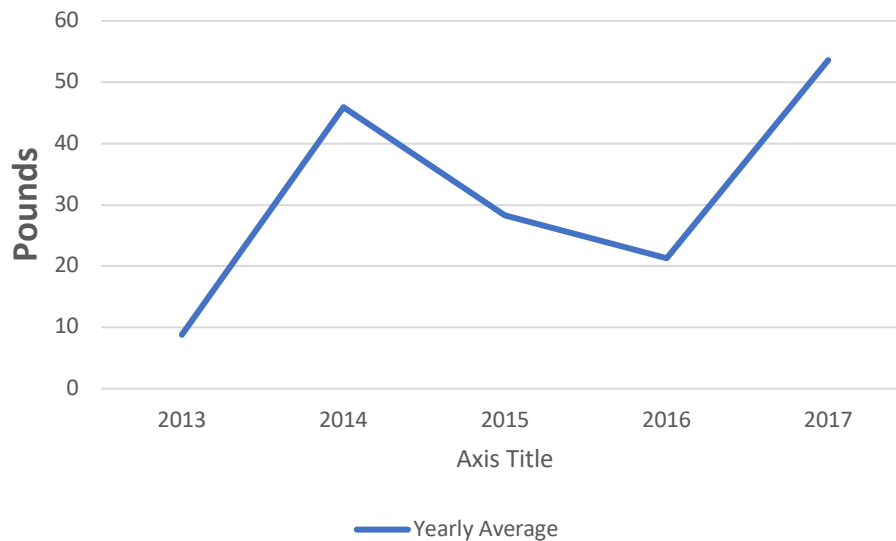
During the 60-month period covered here, there were only six months in which the taskforce did not make a seizure involving methamphetamine. With the exception of June 2014, however, on average over 60 pounds of other drugs were seized for each of those months. On average, 56 pounds of methamphetamine were seized each month. Actual seizures per month could vary greatly, as Figure 3.2 indicates, with two of the largest seizure totals (278 and 191 pounds) both occurring in 2014. But, again, in the months where lower quantities (less than 20 pounds) of methamphetamine were seized, an average of 91 pounds of other drugs were seized for each of those months.

FIGURE 3.2: METHAMPHETAMINE SEIZED 2013-2017



As noted above, cocaine was only second to methamphetamine as the drug most seized by Cal-MMET and seizures were made of this drug in 68% of the months examined here. There were 4-5 months each year where no cocaine seizures were made, with the exception of 2017, when the taskforce seized cocaine in all but two months. Figure 3.3 reflects not only this increased frequency of seizures in 2017, but that the amounts each month also increased. During the entire time period, the taskforce seized an average of 31 pounds of cocaine each month. Between 2013 and 2016, an average of 26 pounds of cocaine was seized each month. For 2017, the average monthly seizure was 54 pounds.

FIGURE 3.3: COCAINE SEIZED 2013-2017



Understanding the Numbers

It is difficult to measure the effectiveness of Cal-MMET if numbers alone are the standard by which the taskforce's contributions to law enforcement's efforts against drug trafficking in Los Angeles County are to be judged. Did the failure to make any seizures in June 2014 or any decreases in the amount of drugs seized from one month to another mean the team was "less productive" in that particular month? Do smaller seizures count "less" than larger ones? Four key factors speak to the need to understand the nature of the work behind the numbers.

Cal-MMET as "Hired Hands": It was previously noted in the Methodology section that members of Cal-MMET do not necessarily perform the ultimate seizures and arrests as a result of an investigation they have been working on. Sometimes this is simply the nature of drug enforcement; another agency gets a "lucky bust" or has the intelligence to move forward with enforcement at that particular moment. Yet it must be kept in mind the taskforce is essentially engaged in responding to requests for their services on the investigations initiated by other law enforcement agencies. In that regard, their official statistics will not necessarily reflect the extent of the work team members put into the investigations they were asked to conduct, particularly if they are solely responsible for providing another agency with intelligence derived from their investigation or if that intelligence allows another team to make a seizure. It is not possible to calculate the seizures and arrests that other agencies or teams made as a result of the surveillance and support for wiretap cases that Cal-MMET supplied.

Long-Term Investigations: Gathering intelligence to build the probable cause necessary to secure search warrants for and arrests of multiple members of a large-scale drug trafficking organization typically require long-term investigations that can take at a minimum weeks, let alone months or even years. Monitoring wiretaps and GPS tracking devices used as part of surveillance for an on-going investigation are time-intensive activities that also not only take time, but can lead to intelligence that puts the investigators onto new suspects and the need for additional surveillance of those individuals. There will indeed be months when seizures are low or, in the case of June 2014, non-existent because the team is involved in multiple investigations that have yet to culminate in a seizure or arrest. The bottom line is the Cal-MMET team is always working on at least one investigation, if not more, but there is usually a lot of groundwork needed in order to amass the amount of intelligence needed to truly infiltrate a drug trafficking organization and ultimately make a seizure or arrest.

Small Yields, Big Returns: It is tempting to equate the seizure of large quantities of drugs with greater productivity or effectiveness. But the nature of Cal-MMET's work is not such that large seizures can be guaranteed; a great deal of work can go into an investigation only to yield a rather minimal drug seizure. This is the "nature of the beast" which can frustrate taskforce investigators, but they also recognize that there is an inevitable ebb and flow to the size of the seizures and do not discount the value the smaller seizures may hold. As one Cal-MMET member put it, "cases can spin off on each other." A small seizure having to do with an associate of a drug trafficking organization may be the opening the team needs to infiltrate that organization. The associate may become an informant, but also the simple ability to seize the associate's phone and gain

access to the contacts and communications with that organization can provide the intelligence needed to make larger seizures or start new investigations.

Cal-MMET as “Hired Hands” Revisited: Cal-MMET has produced consistent results during the grant period of 2015-2017 in terms of seizures and arrests, with the two years prior to the grant acting as further support that this consistency is not limited to the grant period, but predates it and will continue to be seen in the years to come. This consistency through the years has earned the taskforce a strong reputation as reliable investigators who do good work. As a result they are considered the “go to” team and in high demand by law enforcement agencies not just in and around Los Angeles County, but from other areas of the country. This is the ultimate testament to the value of their work for successful large-scale drug interdiction in Southern California.

Beyond the Numbers: Communities, Drug Traffickers, and the Law Enforcement Community

The amount of drugs seized by Cal-MMET would be impressive simply considering the numbers alone, which total over three tons in the past five years. But the true significance of the work of the taskforce becomes sharply underscored when we consider what such large-scale seizures means for the communities in Los Angeles County, the drug trafficking organizations seeking to profit from drug sales, and the law enforcement community at large.

The disruption of access to illicit drugs and the extent to which major seizures such as the ones Cal-MMET regularly undertake impacts communities in ways that cannot be overstated. A “minimum effective dose” of any given narcotic is the least amount considered to be needed to give the desired effect to most users. Individual variation is inevitable given a host of factors, not least of which is tolerance brought about by a drug’s repeated use, causing the body to adapt to the presence of the drug and provide a lessened effect. Nevertheless, the average minimum effective dose for cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine is considered to be .02 grams, with a slightly higher rate at .03 grams for marijuana. As there are 453.59237 grams in a pound, a single pound of cocaine, heroin or methamphetamine will provide approximately 22,680 minimum effective doses, while one pound of marijuana will yield 15,120 doses.

The 6,370 pounds of cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine seized by Cal-MMET represent a combined total of 140,542,058 minimum effective doses that effectively did not reach communities in Los Angeles County between 2013 and 2017. On average, the taskforce was responsible for preventing the distribution of 2,342,368 doses of these drugs each month. Table 3.1 displays the amounts of minimum effective doses seized each year. In all, the taskforce seized the equivalent of 42,600,000 doses of cocaine, 13,400,000 doses of heroin, 7,862,268 doses of marijuana, and 76,679,790 doses of methamphetamine.

TABLE 3.1: MINIMUM EFFECTIVE DOSES SEIZED 2013-2017

Year	Pounds Seized	Minimum Doses
2013	777	16,399,389
2014	1,982	43,395,412
2015	1,241	28,117,048
2016	1,104	24,804,549
2017	1,267	27,825,661
Total	6,370	140,542,058
Monthly Average	106	2,342,368

The street value of these drugs represents the potential profits that drug trafficking organizations stand to make from their sale. As set by HIDTA, methamphetamine has a street value of \$40 per gram, cocaine a street value of \$50 per gram, and powder heroin \$90 per gram. The 5,850 pounds of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine that Cal-MMET was responsible for seizing between 2013 and 2017 had a total street value of \$128,063,832, a hefty profit that was denied to traffickers operating in the county. On average, each month during this time period the taskforce seized \$2,134,397 worth of drugs. Table 3.2 shows the amount of drugs seized alongside its street value. In all, Cal-MMET seized \$42,600,000 worth of cocaine, \$24,120,000 worth of heroin, and \$61,343,832 worth of methamphetamine

TABLE 3.2: STREET VALUE OF DRUGS SEIZED 2013-2017

Year	Pounds Seized	Street Value (\$)
2013	616	13,102,088
2014	1,776	42,524,595
2015	1,237	25,835,255
2016	1,073	22,260,765
2017	1,148	24,341,129
Total	5,850	128,063,832
Monthly Average	98	2,134,397

It must also be considered that the law enforcement community benefits from the work of Cal-MMET in different ways. Local police agencies will inevitably benefit from the seizure of such large quantities of illegal drugs that prevent their distribution in the communities where officers work, allowing them to focus their operations in other areas. But the greater law enforcement community also benefits from the expertise and knowledge that Cal-MMET acquires through the nature of its work. The team values the relationships it maintains with other law enforcement agencies and its ability to share with these agencies important investigative techniques and intelligence regarding drug traffickers. For example, drug traffickers have the means to engage in highly sophisticated methods for smuggling drugs in vehicles with the creation of elaborate hidden compartments. Each investigation Cal-MMET undertakes provides the possibility for

uncovering new methods traffickers are employing that they can then relate to other agencies. Such collective knowledge can only strengthen efforts against drug trafficking across the county.

Challenges facing Cal-MMET

Cal-MMET's stellar reputation in the law enforcement community has been achieved despite several challenges that the taskforce must confront that can have very real consequences for the quality of their day-to-day operations, as well as the safety of their members.

Personnel Needs: Ten investigators from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department comprise the core of Cal-MMET. The high demand for their services means that there are always investigations to be done and meeting this demand is a priority for the team, but it also underscores the reality that the resource personnel represent can be spread too thin. Where larger agencies may have sufficient manpower to pull personnel working other details to cover for investigators who are on vacation or out sick, Cal-MMET does not have that luxury. Days spent in court are days that a particular investigator will not be available to work in the field. The loss of even just two or three team members can hinder the ability of the team to do fieldwork as effectively and, equally important, as safely when all members are available. While officers from local police agencies, such as Glendale Police Department, have been attached to the team in the past, they have pulled out because of the lack of sufficient personnel in their own agencies. The ideal staffing of the Cal-MMET team would include five officers from participating agencies, but obviously funding for these officers must be met and is not currently available to do so.

The nature of the taskforce's work further emphasizes the need for more personnel to maximize the potential of the team's ability to impact drug trafficking in Los Angeles County. Each investigator has a minimum of one active case, but on average, an investigator is typically working anywhere from two to six cases at any given time. The activities being undertaken on these cases will vary, ranging from being actively out in the field engaging in surveillance to monitoring long-distance surveillance tools, such as wiretaps, cameras, GPS trackers, and pings indicating locations of cell phones. Attention will switch between cases as warranted; a case may be the primary focus of an investigator for a given period of time until another investigation demands his attention. But no active case is ever truly "left alone" when the focus must switch, ongoing monitoring must be maintained of all cases even if the investigators are not actively engaging in activity on them. Ultimately, investigations are highly labor intensive; as one team member said, investigators are "just never off the clock". They are accessible by phone 24 hours a day and equipped with laptops and iPads due to the need for ongoing monitoring and the reality that there is always ongoing communication among law enforcement about a case.

The challenge of personnel always extends to ensuring that new investigators brought onto the team are aware of and capable of meeting the high demands that being part of Cal-MMET entails. While being a Bonus 2 detective is the base requirement, the vetting process for new team members includes demonstrating a solid work history, quality investigative skills and record of productivity. That only those detectives most committed to such drug enforcement efforts will seek to join Cal-MMET seems assured when it is considered that prospective team members are

aware they will work long and irregular hours and that the demands placed upon them can have detrimental effects on their personal life. As one of the team stated, “We don’t dictate our hours, are hours are dictated for us by the crooks.” An already highly demanding job is only made all the more so when insufficient personnel are available to address the needs of investigation.

Technological Advances: As technology continues to rapidly evolve, the challenges that not just Cal-MMET but all law enforcement agencies face also evolve. Drug traffickers are forever seeking ways to avoid detection by law enforcement and find themselves well-served by emerging new communication technologies. At times, it can be a challenge for Cal-MMET to stay apace of traffickers’ use of technology; as one member termed it, it is a never-ending “cat and mouse game out there trying to identify, track, follow and take these people down.” Just as the taskforce is continually seeking to become more educated on the methods traffickers are employing to communicate and circumvent detection, the traffickers become more educated about law enforcement operations. It is common for traffickers to use the messaging applications on cell phones for their communications. A particular challenge Cal-MMET faces is that many of those applications have become encrypted, which is the encoding of a message so that only the authorized parties have the ability to access the message in its original form. This requires the ability to decipher such messages and sometimes this is something that is not possible, giving traffickers the ability to impede law enforcement ability at least for a time to unlock communications that can be critical to an investigation.

Lack of Dedicated Air Support: Covert operations are essential to the success of Cal-MMET operations, surveillance techniques are only truly effective if suspects remain unaware they are under surveillance. This can be a great challenge for the taskforce when working in the field because of the limited number of investigators it employs. Following suspects on the ground is not always feasible as getting too close to a target will increase the chance he or she will become aware of an investigator’s presence upon repeated sightings. A more ideal situation would be to have different investigators rotated in and out for ground surveillance to reduce the possibility of detection, but there simply are not enough personnel to do so. In this regard, there is a need for air support to not only aid in Cal-MMET’s investigations, but to increase officer safety when warrant operations are undertaken in order to see who is present or fleeing the location. While the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department has its Aero Bureau that the team may avail itself of, often times these services are simply not available to the team because of the shortened hours the bureau keeps owing to a department-wide personnel shortage. As L.A. IMPACT has noted, having air support gives them a “critical edge” and for Cal-MMET to also be able to have such an edge would undoubtedly contribute to maximizing the effectiveness of their operations.

Opioids and Recreational Marijuana: Two very different drug-related trends are poised to pose significant challenges to the taskforce. The first concerns the encroaching opioid crisis that has plagued other parts of the nation and which is gaining traction in Southern California. That trafficking in fentanyl is on the rise in Los Angeles County is evidenced by the seizure the team made of 22 pounds of fentanyl in October of 2017. This amount is staggering if we consider two milligrams of fentanyl can be a lethal dose and 22 pounds contains 9,979,032 milligrams. The team recognizes the potential for a sharp increase in the number of overdose deaths as fentanyl

gets more integrated into the drug trafficking operations in the county, making it more important than ever to continue their work to bring down drug trafficking organizations before fentanyl is allowed to reach communities. The legalization of recreational marijuana in California, on the other hand, represents a challenge of a different kind. There is no definitive answer at this time as to whether marijuana is a gateway drug to harder drug use, but there is a concern that, if this is so, it will only increase the demand for drugs in Los Angeles County and the amount of drugs smuggled into the state. Another concern is that legalization will make it easier for drug trafficking organizations to launder the money made from the sale of illegal narcotics through the use of legal marijuana dispensaries. The easier it is for traffickers to launder money, the stronger they can become. Ultimately, there is reason to believe the legalization of recreational marijuana will not only make the work of Cal-MMET more difficult, but make its continued efforts even more vital to the overall law enforcement response to drug trafficking in the county.

Summary and Conclusions

Between 2013 and 2017, Cal-MMET demonstrated a high level of productivity; their operations during this period resulted in the seizure of 6,370 pounds of illegal narcotics and the arrest of over 400 individuals. When we consider drug seizures within the context of how many doses did not reach the community and the amount of profit drug traffickers were denied, we see that the taskforce was responsible for preventing the distribution of over 140 million doses of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine to Los Angeles County communities and deprived drug trafficking organizations of over 120 million dollars' worth of profit. The consistency with which Cal-MMET's work translated to tangible results is evident: on average, seven individuals arrested and over 100 pounds of drugs were seized on a monthly basis, which resulted in the prevention of the distribution of over two million doses of drugs and denied traffickers over two million dollars in profits each month.

These numbers are all the more impressive and speak even more to the effectiveness of the taskforce when we consider that Cal-MMET operates as a "hired hand" for other law enforcement agencies engaged in drug interdiction and their official statistics do not represent the fruit of their labors when other agencies make the ultimate seizure and arrests on a case. Cal-MMET operations regularly contribute to the disruption of the drug trade in Los Angeles County, while also having what can be considered an unmeasured "ripple effect" in providing the investigative groundwork for other agencies and other counties to make seizures and arrests. Not only does the team's work lead directly to drug seizures and arrests of drug traffickers, but it also places them in the position to share the expertise and intelligence that they acquire as part of that work with other law enforcement agencies, helping to strengthen the efforts against mid- to high-level drug trafficking in Southern California. There can be no question that the work of Cal-MMET could not simply be assumed by local agencies and that the loss of their contributions would have a detrimental impact on the effort to reduce the presence of illicit drugs in Los Angeles County.

Cal-MMET faces multiple challenges now and in the future that will undoubtedly require additional funding if these challenges are to be successfully met. Having sufficient personnel is key to maintaining the quality of service they are currently in great demand to provide other agencies. The work of taskforce investigators is quite labor intensive, effectively requiring them to be available at all hours to ensure that monitoring of cases is continuous. With no officers from local agencies participating, it is easy for the unavailability of just a few investigators to hamper the team's ability to safely conduct surveillance, something further compounded by the lack of dedicated air support. As with all law enforcement agencies in Southern California, there is a need to continually play "cat and mouse" with drug traffickers in terms of coming up to date on new technological methods for avoiding detection. And the rise of fentanyl use and legalization of recreational marijuana only add to the challenges Cal-MMET already faces in its drug interdiction efforts.

Chapter 4: LA CLEAR

Program Description

In 1991, the Los Angeles Regional Criminal Information Clearinghouse (LA CLEAR) was developed as a joint response by the Los Angeles County Police Chief's Association, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and the then California Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement to the shifting of the large-scale importation of illegal narcotics from Miami to Los Angeles County. Since 1994, LA CLEAR has been a critical resource for law enforcement agencies in the Los Angeles Metropolitan High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), providing services to agencies in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, which altogether have a population of 18 million. Services are basically available to any agency, whether local, state, or federal, who are working in these counties or have investigations that in some fashion relate to individuals or organizations with a connection to the counties. LA CLEAR services offer a comprehensive range of investigative and intelligence services that are unparalleled for the region.

There are four primary areas of service that LA CLEAR provides the region. The first area of service concerns deconfliction through the Watch Center, which is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Deconfliction is essentially intended to alert officers to the field operations and investigations of other agencies. Frequently agencies are engaged in overlapping investigations that involve the same individuals or criminal activity. Case/subject deconfliction involves the maintenance of a database system that allows LA CLEAR to be a resource for whether a person, place, or crime has been investigated; detectives may make inquiries to the system and LA CLEAR personnel will notify them of other agencies that may have intelligence regarding their inquiry, in effect acting as a key point for allowing the sharing information of across agencies. Deconfliction also entails tracking field operations occurring in the region in order to determine when different operations are in close geographical proximity to one another and being able to alert those involved in the operations with the goal of preventing conflicts. All intelligence regarding investigations and field operations is provided voluntarily by law enforcement personnel.

LA CLEAR further offers support to investigations through its Analytical Unit, providing advanced analysis of data that results as part of an agency's investigative efforts; this involves extrapolating data to identify trends or make connections between disparate points of data that detectives overlook or otherwise do not have time to uncover. Another area of service is the maintenance of an Electronic Surveillance Center which offers support and monitoring on wiretap cases undertaken by regional agencies. The final area of support is training for law enforcement working in the HIDTA region and covers a wide range of topics, such as how to increase the identification of drug distribution and understanding of drug use, techniques for testifying in court, and new trends in drug trafficking. Training is also required for law enforcement personnel to be able to gain access to LA CLEAR services. LA CLEAR is ultimately an invaluable resource for law enforcement in Southern California, providing services that promote officer safety and help

agencies make the most of limited resources, serving as a hub of vital intelligence that inform the efforts to address narcotics, gangs, and other serious crime in the region.

Methodology

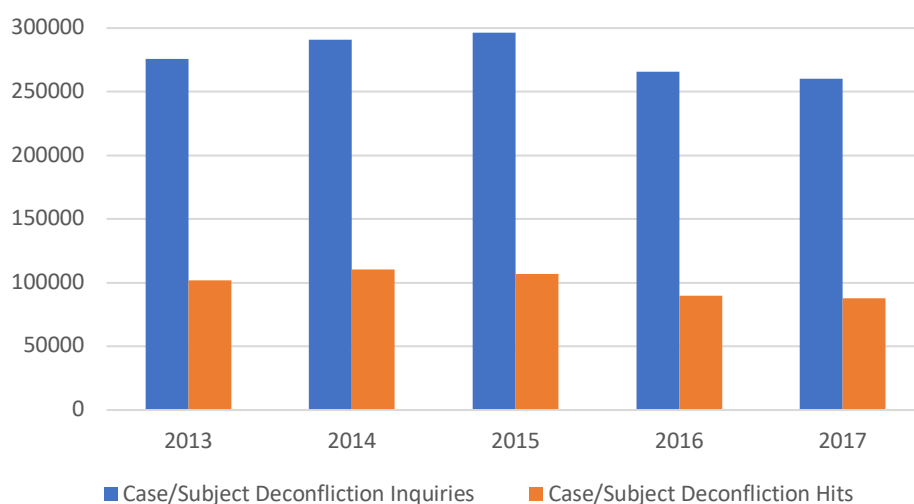
This evaluation of LA CLEAR seeks to examine its operations between the years 2013 and 2017. Two sources of data were employed for this assessment. LA CLEAR data was made available regarding deconfliction services, including the number of case/subject deconfliction inquiries and hits that were made, as well as the number of critical events (field operations) that were tracked and notifications that were provided to agencies about potential conflicts. Statistics also included how often support was given for electronic surveillance cases, including wiretaps and pen registers. Interviews were also conducted with key LA CLEAR personnel in order to provide an overview and more comprehensive understanding of its operations.

Results

Deconfliction and Hits

There is clearly a consistently strong demand for LA CLEAR services as to law enforcement agencies seeking to determine whether other agencies were engaged in similar investigations or might have intelligence related to their own investigations. Between 2013 and 2017, law enforcement made a total of 1,388,780 case/subject deconfliction inquiries to the LA CLEAR Watch Center.

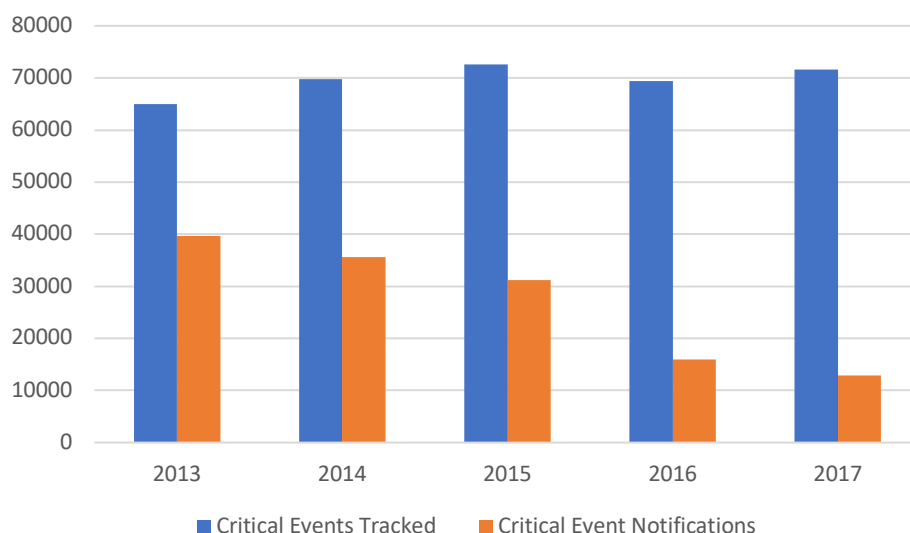
FIGURE 4.1: CASE/SUBJECT DECONFLICTION INQUIRIES AND HITS 2013-2017



On average, the Watch Center fielded over 270,000 inquiries each year during this period, with an average monthly rate of over 23,000 inquiries. Figure 4.1 shows both the number of case/subject deconfliction inquiries and the number of “hits” those inquiries yielded. Hits consist of the number of times that an inquiry resulted in the Watch Center Analysts identifying another agency that was indeed in some way investigating the same case or had intelligence they could provide on a case. There were close to 500,000 hits during this period, with an average of almost 100,000 hits being made each year. The average yearly hit rate was 36%; as Figure 4.1 indicates, this rate of yielding hits was quite consistent through the years, with a range of 34 to 38%.

Critical event tracking concerns those occasions when law enforcement agencies are engaging in field operations of some kind in the region that have the potential to be in conflict with one another. Field operations can consist of a wide array of actions. They might entail undercover operations, such as buying illegal narcotics, making arrests or serving search warrants, and engaging in different types of surveillance. Between 2013 and 2017, the LA CLEAR Watch Center tracked 348,270 critical events in the HIDTA region. On average, close to 70,000 critical events were tracked each year, with almost 6,000 critical events tracked in any given month. In total, the Watch Center notified over 130,000 different operations of potential conflicts due to close geographical proximity in this five year period, with an average of over 27,000 notifications made per year. As Figure 4.2 shows, there has been a steady and sizeable decrease in the number of notifications that operations have received about possible conflicts. In 2013, there was a 61% rate of deconfliction notices on critical events. In 2017, the rate of deconfliction on critical events had dropped to 18%.

FIGURE 4.2: CRITICAL EVENT TRACKING AND DECONFLICTION 2013-2017



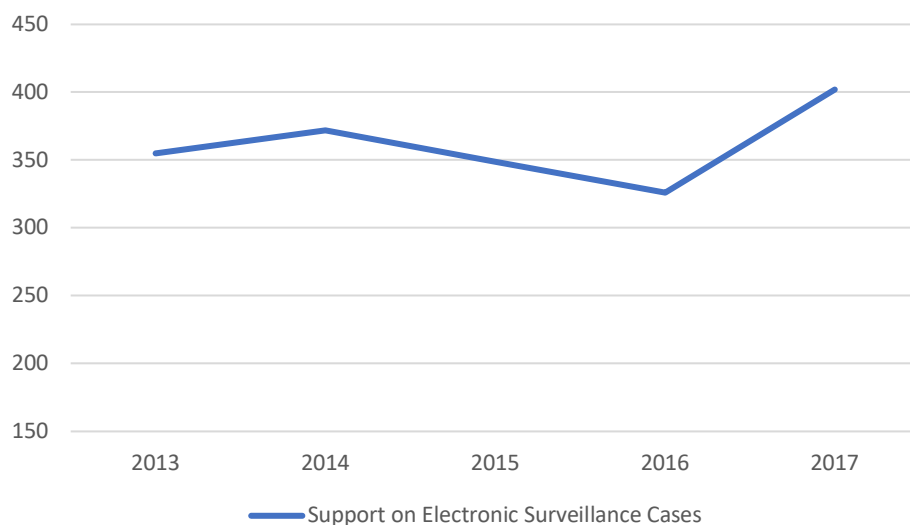
The decrease in alerts given to law enforcement can be attributed to a change in the metrics LA CLEAR employs to determine whether or not the geographical proximity represents a potential conflict. Previously, the geographical perimeter used was a radius of three-quarters of a mile. Approximately two years ago, this perimeter was narrowed to a radius of half a mile, thus

explaining the decrease in the number of operations that were considered to be in close enough proximity to one another to represent a potential conflict. This decision to tighten the perimeter defining a conflict was predicated on the belief that there was a need to focus on those operations that were closer in proximity to one another. This allowed for greater operational efficiency by reducing the number of erroneous conflicts the Watch Center identified, therefore allowing for a deconfliction rate that was more meaningful in nature.

Electronic Surveillance Support Cases

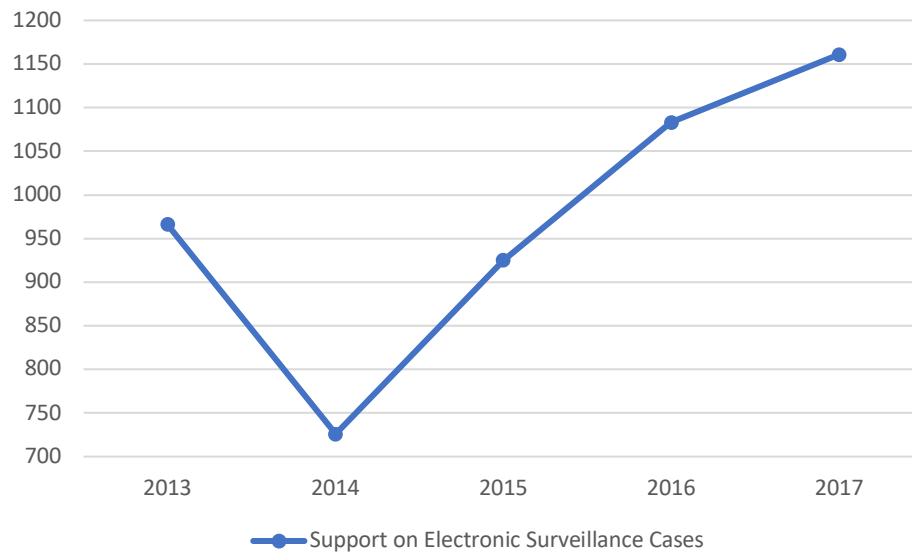
LA CLEAR's Electronic Surveillance Center provided support on 1,804 cases in which law enforcement agencies in the region were using electronic surveillance between 2013 and 2017. On average, there were approximately 360 cases for which support was provided each year, with a monthly average of 30 cases. As Figure 4.3 shows, the demand for LA CLEAR services was relatively consistent between 2013 and 2016, but showed a substantial increase in 2017, when there were just over 400 cases that support was provided for.

FIGURE 4.3: SUPPORT ON ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE CASES 2013-2017



The number of cases specifically providing wiretaps for cellphones remained relatively consistent between 2013 and 2017, with a total of 1,037 such cases. On average, there were slightly over 200 cases each year involving wiretaps, with approximately 17 cases each month. The number of cases in which pen registers were provided, however, has substantially increased in the past two years. Pen registers are essentially dialed number recorders. While still requiring a warrant, they are much less intrusive than wiretaps in the sense that they only record all telephone numbers that have been called from a particular phone. In all, LA CLEAR provided 4,861 pen registers during the five year period, on average providing just over 80 pen registers each month. As Figure 4.4 below indicates, there was a sizeable increase of almost a hundred more registers between 2015 and 2016, and again between 2016 and 2017 as demand from law enforcement agencies rose.

FIGURE 4.4: PEN REGISTERS PROVIDED FOR CELLPHONES 2013-2017



Beyond the Numbers

LA CLEAR offers services that are clearly vital to the efficiency and safety of law enforcement operations in Southern California. Equally clear is that their services are in high demand by both agencies located in the region and those seeking assistance on out-of-region investigations that are in some way connected to the area. Indeed, of the three deconfliction systems in the nation, LA CLEAR handles approximately 43% of the nation's volume and just under 50% of all law enforcement agencies in the country use the LA CLEAR system. LA CLEAR is also responsible for providing 3-4 hour orientations to new investigators every six weeks that are important for orienting law enforcement to use LA CLEAR to their own advantage. It also offers training on a wide range of topics that will improve officer skills and expertise as they pertain to responding to illegal narcotics, gang activity, the mentally ill, and human trafficking. As the number one HIDTA training center in the nation, approximately 12,000 students receive training each year and, in order to meet the demand and ease the burden of travelling long distance, online modules are now available for some topics.

The necessary electronic surveillance support they provide undergirds law enforcement operations targeting drug trafficking and other criminal organizations in the area. The numbers strongly indicate that there is consistent, if not increasing, demand for this support. The Analytical Unit offers a level of expertise for analysis of intelligence acquired during investigations that most agencies simply do not have the resources to attain. It is truly impossible to quantify the benefits that LA CLEAR has provided and will continue to provide to the law enforcement agencies not just in Southern California, but across the nation. As one LA CLEAR member said, "We're badge neutral and that's why it works, agencies can come to us no matter size or how prestigious they may be and use our services." A more in depth look at the deconfliction achieved

through the Watch Center and the work of the Analytical Unit is warranted to fully appreciate the depth of the services LA CLEAR provides.

Deconfliction: The Watch Center provides two very important services to law enforcement that seek to achieve the ultimate goal of deconfliction, or eliminating the conflicts that exist between agencies that can amount to either the duplication of investigative efforts or result in the collision of field operations. The Watch Center is basically the “air traffic control” for LA CLEAR, with three shifts of analysts on duty around the clock. The statistics provided above testify to the perpetually strong demand for services and labor intensive nature of the Center’s operations, where analysts are responsible for, on average posting and tracking 6,000 operations in any given month. The reality of such a workload is all the more remarkable if we consider that LA CLEAR analysts are posting on average eight operations every minute. Fielding case/subject inquiries and notifying law enforcement of potential conflicts in the field translates to approximately 75,000 incoming calls and over 92,000 outgoing calls for the analysts in a single year, not to mention nearly 5,000 faxes as well.

“Critical events” where at least two, if not more, field operations are slated to take place in close geographical proximity and overlap in time are a common enough occurrence, particularly in Los Angeles County where both the Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department operate, not to mention major taskforces such as L.A. IMPACT and Cal-MMET. In fact, the sheer size of some agencies and lack of communication that may exist within an agency can cause separate units from a single agency to have a potential conflict in operations. Certainly one of the concerns of a “blue on blue” incident in which two field operations clash in some fashion is that investigations may be thwarted if a suspect is alerted to police presence prior to an arrest, search, or as a part of surveillance operations. But a greater concern is predicated on the possibility that officer safety will be compromised, and not just by the actions of the suspect, but by fellow officers as well. As recently as November 2017, officers from two different precincts of the Detroit Police Department engaged in independent operations ran afoul of one another, with the end result of the officers allegedly having a physical altercation and drawing guns on each other (Fox 2 Detroit, 2017). There is a very real danger for lethal encounters to unfold very quickly between armed law enforcement officers, making LA CLEAR a necessity to ensure the situational awareness exists that will avert this from happening.

Case/subject inquiries further ensure that agencies are aware of the investigative efforts of other agencies that might be of assistance to their own investigations. LA CLEAR’s database is not a repository for all investigative data, the data is voluntarily supplied from law enforcement agencies and has limited data points, such as a known license plate or types of crimes investigated. But it is valuable for acting as a “pointer system” that allows the Watch Center to point detectives in the direction of local agencies that are also investigating a person or organization. Law enforcements can amass great deals of intelligence and, while there have been improvements in the sharing of intelligence among agencies, agencies can still be “a little territorial” about the intelligence they have. LA CLEAR’s case/subject database represents a conscious shift from such a mentality on the part of agencies in Southern California and acknowledges that working in information silos, where information is not shared between

systems, goes against the best interests of agencies that ostensibly are dealing with the same crime issues. This is only confirmed by the nature of the crimes that are found in the database, which consist primarily of investigations related to drug trafficking, gang activity, homicides, and guns. That over a third of inquiries to the case/subject database result in a hit means a significant saving in both time and money for local agencies that can be invested in other activities and greater focus on investigations where such outside intelligence does not exist. In this sense, there is no means for measuring the true value of this particular service to agencies.

Deconfliction ultimately affords the opportunity for agencies to not just communicate with one another about their own operations and intelligence, but reevaluate their operations once they have this knowledge. The possibility now exists for agencies to coordinate their operations or even acquiesce to another agency if that agency has the better case. For example, one agency might be working a case that will allow it to target someone higher up in a criminal organization than another agency, whose case is primarily targeting a lower-level offender. With the mutual goal of disrupting that organization's operations, agreement might be reached to allow the agency with the better case to move forward. While this does not necessarily always happen, LA CLEAR at least paves the way for that possibility which would not otherwise exist. Southern California is highly mobile and crime moves rather easily between counties. "Borders get erased in our system. We're blind to that because we want to make sure cops don't replicate what someone else is already doing or get hurt in their operations."

Analytical Unit: The Analytical Unit offers a truly indispensable resource for detectives who are burdened with heavy caseloads and/or insufficient understanding of the complexities of the data that their investigations have yielded. Analysts are engaged to look at data pertaining to any number of crimes; while their work is often connected to drug trafficking investigations, they also work on cases involving burglary rings, homicide, human trafficking, and fraud. What the unit provides is an analytical toolset for detectives to avail themselves of that includes thinking outside of the normal law enforcement "box" and seeking ways to exploit the data that has resulted from investigations. Investigators may find themselves with a great deal of intelligence derived from the use of different surveillance techniques that simply do not lend themselves to easy interpretation or require a great deal of effort to make sense of. When their own agency is unable to carry out a more advanced analysis, investigators can contact the supervisor of the Analytical Unit to request its services.

The supervisor is responsible for assigning an analyst to the case. All analysts are qualified to work any type of case; at the most basic level, each has certification as a criminal intelligence analyst. But most also have additional certification in specialized areas or attend trainings and conferences that allow them to stay current in the field and aware of any new trends in criminal behavior and techniques. Specializations include human trafficking, telephony and the extrapolation of cell phone data, ARC GIS mapping, and fraud cases. Cases involving wiretaps or data from the use of cell phones, such as "pings" from cell phone towers, can be key to identifying co-conspirators in large scale operations or mapping a suspects' movements. Large amounts of data provided from such cases can not only be dense and difficult to navigate for detectives, but can also be challenging for juries to understand. Analysts are able to make important connections

and synthesize this data that can then be translated into easy to digest graphs and charts. Their work makes them essential to court cases, where they will be called upon to testify as to their findings. The unit represents the time and analytical skill set that most investigators do not have. While they use the intelligence they are provided by an agency, they are also highly proactive in moving beyond that data, able to search a myriad of databases, including other national deconfliction systems, or scour social media for important but often overlooked points of information. This ability to “drill down” on a case not only allows detectives to make more efficient use of their time, but ultimately helps to strengthen the evidence that will be presented in court.

The Greatest Challenge facing LA CLEAR

LA CLEAR is a much needed resource for the law enforcement community in Southern California, offering support for field operations and investigations that are critical for the success of efforts against criminal organizations and the maintenance of officer safety. Yet LA CLEAR has faced substantial cuts to funding that has limited hiring of analysts for the Watch Center and the Analytical Unit. How LA CLEAR has been able to “stave off the wolf at the door” that these cuts represent is by simply not filling some positions when analysts left or retired. For example, the Analytical Unit was described as “skeletal” in terms of the number of analysts currently employed. That number is seven, down from nine or ten analysts as recently as five years ago, and much lower than the twenty or so analysts that filled the unit previously. Each analyst in the unit is on average handling six to eight cases at any given time; when we consider how labor intensive each case truly is, such a caseload is obviously a concern. LA CLEAR prides itself as a resource that is always available to law enforcement agencies and accepts the majority of cases that come in, but the unit is at “maximum capacity” and there are concerns that analysts will get “burned out” or their expertise lost if they decide to leave.

The sheer volume of operations that the Watch Center is responsible for tracking was complicated by the passage of AB 109 in 2011. The requirement that local law enforcement be responsible for doing compliance checks on parolees correlated to agencies duly reporting such checks, which can “make the map blow up” when such checks are in full enforcement. A single area can register, for example, 40 “operations” as being underway. Sometimes there are enough analysts to handle the workload, sometimes there are not. More personnel would certainly not be wasted and would relieve the burden on analysts, but the Watch Center is able to meet the demands placed on it “barring some other piece of legislation” that creates a heavier volume of operations to be posted. One important aspect of the Watch Center is that law enforcement personnel get to speak with a live operator and do not have to wait for information, something that could be compromised if insufficient personnel are available to respond to inquiries. At this time, no one is turned away, but services may not be given the same day as inquiries and there is often a need to “triage the most important cases.” For all analysts, when even just one or two analysts are lost, “that’s a call that gets answered slower, that’s a case we might not get to. It’s huge.”

It should not be forgotten that LA CLEAR also must have additional resources it needs to maintain its value as a resource to the law enforcement community. Increasing the educational opportunities not only for the analysts, but also the engineers and technicians involved in the support of electronic surveillance will be important. Staying on the cutting edge in a world of rapidly evolving technology is crucial if LA CLEAR is to meaningfully serve agencies in Southern California. Law enforcement relies on and must be able to take for granted that LA CLEAR has the necessary level of expertise and technological tools to be an effective support system in efforts against criminal operations. With the increasing sophistication that large scale criminal organizations employ in their own use of technology to evade detection, continual technological development is a must if LA CLEAR is to stay that necessary one step ahead.

Summary and Conclusions

LA CLEAR services and support were consistently in great demand between 2013 and 2017. Its deconfliction system is employed by just under half of all law enforcement agencies and handles 43% of the volume in the nation. LA CLEAR received 1,388,780 case/subject inquiries to its database and there were approximately 500,000 hits regarding other agencies who were also investigating or in some way had intelligence on a case being inquired about. This amounted to an average 36% hit rate overall. In other words, in a little over a third of the cases being inquired about, LA CLEAR was able to point an agency in the direction of another agency for the purpose of sharing intelligence and possibly coordinating operations. The Watch Center posted and tracked 348,270 critical events or field operations that had the potential to be in conflict and sent out over 27,000 deconfliction alerts. In total, LA CLEAR offered support for 1,804 electronic surveillance cases, while providing service on 1,037 wiretaps and 4,861 pen registers. This consistently strong level of support provided to law enforcement translates to an operation that, on average, was responsible for fielding over 23,000 case/subject inquiries, tracking 6,000 critical events, and provided support for well over 300 electronic surveillance cases each month.

To describe LA CLEAR simply as a “resource” to the law enforcement community does not do it justice, for the support it provides is so very vital to sustaining the work of law enforcement in Southern California. It is impossible to quantify how much LA CLEAR’s support has benefited agencies and their operations, but unquestionably these agencies are lucky to have the services of LA CLEAR at their disposal. Beyond the always important training to enhance officer skills and knowledge of criminal operations, there is the equally important support that is given for electronic surveillance cases, which is a key investigative tool in efforts against criminal organizations that persist in the region. At its core, deconfliction is about affording agencies the opportunity to make use of limited resources in the most efficient manner and increasing officer safety when they are out in the field. The number of hits that inquiries have had in the case/subject database and notifications agencies have been given of potential conflicts between operations are already impressive. Yet it must be considered that there was a far greater benefit to agencies that spans more than will ever truly be known. How much time was spared when agencies were able to connect with other agencies that had intelligence pertaining to their own cases? How was that time actually used? In terms of geographical deconfliction, what might

have been the outcome for operations that did not receive a notice from LA CLEAR? One can well imagine situations similar to the one that occurred in Detroit, only it is quite possible the outcomes might have been far worse, even deadly. Obviously the contingencies are endless for clashes that might have occurred between field operations, particularly in a region that is a hub for drug trafficking and gang activity. The value of the Analytical Unit in extrapolating complex data is likewise immense not only for the time it can save investigators, but in shoring up evidence that is presented in court and making cases even stronger.

The greatest challenge LA CLEAR faces is in funding, which has steadily and significantly decreased over time. While LA CLEAR is proud to serve the law enforcement community and does not want to turn any case/subject inquiry or request for analytical support down, the demand has a now smaller cadre of analysts “overwhelmed.” The loss of even one analyst can make the difference between a case being accepted or an inquiry being responded to in a timely manner. These things have very real consequences for law enforcement and their investigations. Without the proper resources, LA CLEAR struggles at times to maintain its high standards for *being* that resource that law enforcement in Southern California can always rely on. The efficiency of agencies and safety of their officers will begin to be compromised if sufficient funding is not provided. LA CLEAR is an indispensable part of the law enforcement community, its support far reaching in terms of the benefits it does supply and can continue to supply in the future.

Chapter 5: CHESS

Program Description

The Clearinghouse Electronic Surveillance System (CHESS) is a full-time wiretap unit housed within the Major Narcotics Division of the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office and the largest wiretap program in the state of California. CHESS is currently staffed with two Deputy District Attorneys (DDAs) who are responsible for providing the legal expertise necessary for successful wiretap applications. The wiretap orders that are received are implemented at the Los Angeles Criminal Information Clearinghouse (LA CLEAR) and other centers for wiretap monitoring. This unit is not only responsible for assisting law enforcement agencies at the federal, state, and local level, including multijurisdictional taskforces, but also provides Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) training on statutory wiretap requirements and application preparation for law enforcement personnel. In this regard, all law enforcement officers who seek wiretap orders have been specially trained and are aware of the wiretap requirements, which can prove critical for the efficiency of the application process. The CHESS DDAs are responsible for providing such training approximately once a month. There is also the "Wiretap College" that is internal to the District Attorney's Office, allowing for the training of other DDAs who will be involved in prosecutions that also include evidence derived from wiretaps.

The CHESS DDAs engage in the following wiretap-related responsibilities: availability for consultation with law enforcement personnel who wish to seek a wiretap order and those monitoring wiretaps; review of all new wiretap affidavits and applications; preparation of extensions for wiretap orders once the mandatory 30 day period for the order has been reached; review of all cases involving wiretaps for the filing of criminal charges; litigation of any motions to suppress or limit the admissibility of conversations intercepted by wiretaps in court; preparation of orders for the sealing of certain communications; and prosecution of cases that were derived from wiretaps. CHESS also assists in the preparation of both search warrant and wiretap manuals, as well as maintains currency as to all wiretap-related statutes and case law. Ultimately, CHESS is fundamental to securing the necessary surveillance of drug trafficking and other criminal organizations operating in Los Angeles County and their subsequent prosecution.

Methodology

The current evaluation of CHESS seeks to examine the unit's productivity and operations between the years 2013 and 2017. Two sources of data were employed for this assessment. First, CHESS provided statistics concerning the number of wiretap orders that were sought between 2013 and 2017 and the number of wiretap orders that were obtained. Data was also provided on how many prosecutions had been initiated based on the wiretaps obtained in these years, as well as the number of those prosecutions that successfully resulted in the conviction of the offender(s). Second, interviews were conducted with those personnel from the District Attorney's Office who

are connected to CHES operations to provide not only an overview of the unit's mission, but also provide fuller understanding of the nature of wiretap statutes, applications review process, and prosecutions.

Results

Wiretaps and Prosecutions

Between 2013 and 2017, a total of 351 wiretap orders were sought with the assistance of CHES, averaging almost six wiretap orders sought each month during this period. As Figure 5.1 clearly indicates, the demand for CHES services has only increased in recent years with a dramatic increase between 2015, when only 32 wiretaps were sought, and 2017, when there were over 120 wiretaps sought.

FIGURE 5.1: WIRETAPS SOUGHT 2013-2017

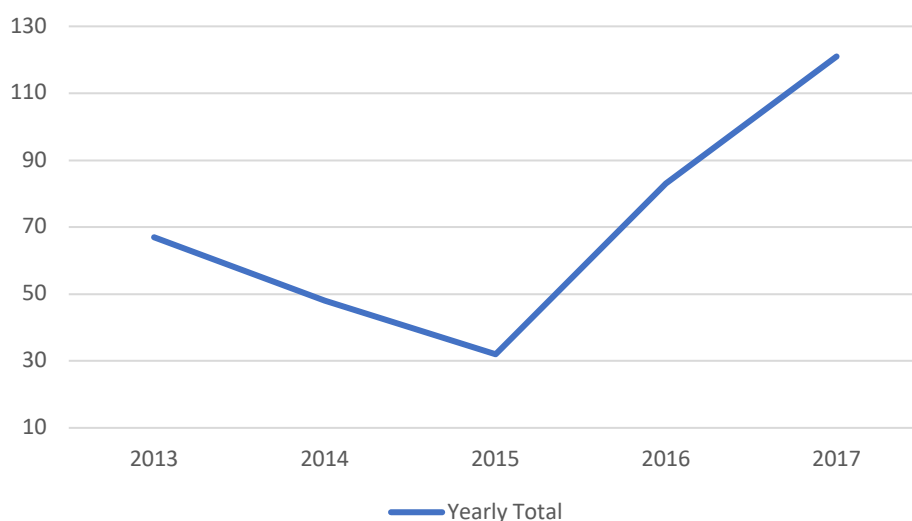
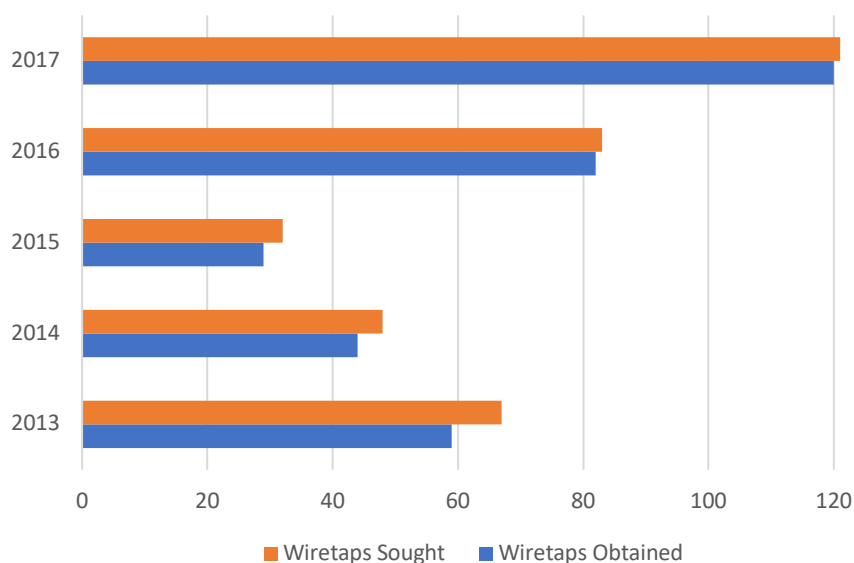


Figure 5.2 displays the number of wiretap orders that were sought compared to the number of wiretaps actually obtained. Of the 351 wiretaps that were sought in the five year period covered here, 95% of those wiretaps or 334 wiretaps in total were obtained. In all, 28 prosecutions were initiated based on the wiretap orders that were obtained during this time and, to date, 10 of these prosecutions have resulted in the conviction of the offenders, although it is important to note that some of these cases remain ongoing and have yet to reach resolution.

FIGURE 5.2: WIRETAPS SOUGHT AND OBTAINED 2013-2017



Understanding the Numbers

CHESS has demonstrated a remarkably strong and consistent record of ensuring that the wiretaps law enforcement personnel seek are ultimately obtained and this is truly the basis by which to understand and judge the effectiveness of the unit. While the initiation and success of prosecutions are certainly important outcome measures of effectiveness, the fundamental nature of law enforcement investigations of drug trafficking and other serious offenses must be understood in order to recognize the limitations to the data provided here.

Wiretaps “Not Obtained”: That 95% of all wiretaps that were sought were also actually obtained becomes an even more impressive figure when we consider why the 17 wiretaps were “not obtained.” Rather than being due to any failure of the applications to supply the necessary legal foundation for securing a wiretap order, the majority of these applications were simply withdrawn by the DDAs because they were no longer valid. Those involved in drug trafficking and other large scale criminal operations are typically quite well-versed in the methods of surveillance that they might be subject to and take numerous and often highly sophisticated precautions to evade detection. In the case of wiretaps, the easiest evasion tactic is to simply (and often regularly) switch the phone they are using for communications. In seeking a wiretap order, the particular phone number must be identified, not only as a part of showing the proper legal justification for tapping that particular number, but also to secure the tap by the phone company. When it is realized the suspect is no longer using a particular number, a new order must be sought specifying the new number, which now requires a new application that provides the legal basis for seeking the tap for *that* number. In the instances here where the wiretap order was not obtained, the vast majority were essentially due to this problem and the DDA withdrew the application.

The Nature of Investigations: That the number of prosecutions initiated is so low has nothing to do with any shortcoming on the part of CHES and everything to do with the nature of investigations into large scale criminal operations. As the drug interdiction efforts of Cal-MMET and L.A. IMPACT both attest to, these typically entail long-term investigations that can take months, even years to come to fruition in terms of criminal charges being filed. Cases routinely “spin off” one another, where a wiretap in one case will yield the identities of more participants in the criminal operations or another avenue for investigators to pursue in some fashion, possibly additional wiretaps. Working to infiltrate high-level drug trafficking organizations involves identifying multiple players and gathering sufficient evidence, which will inevitably take time if the goal is to truly disrupt that organization’s operations. In this sense, it is unsurprising that so few wiretaps that were received in any given year actually resulted in criminal charges being filed that very same year, let alone yielded a criminal conviction.

The Greatest Challenge facing CHES

There is one primary challenge that CHES faces and that is adequate funding for the necessary personnel to meet the demands of assisting law enforcement in acquiring wiretaps. CHES initially consisted of three DDAs and a significant portion of their salary came from grant funding, but is now only staffed with two DDAs, for whom only 26% of their salary is covered by grant funding. There is also the need for a wiretap coordinator for dealing with data needs of the unit, such as keeping the statistical database up to date, and other functions such as preparing complaints and subpoenas, as well as generally acting as a liaison with the court, something that falls on an overburdened support staff to attend to. As the data indicate, however, law enforcement is seeking a markedly greater number of wiretaps in recent years. As technology continues to advance, particularly in the realm of cell phone applications that allow for multiple modes of communication, it seems certain that the demand for the CHES DDA’s services will continue to increase in the years to come. And it is not possible to truly understand what the demands on CHES are like unless one considers the rigorous standards that must be upheld in order to obtain each wiretap.

Understanding California’s Wiretap Statute: Use of wiretaps to intercept the communications between two parties is considered to be highly invasive of an individual’s privacy; these are in effect “super search warrants” and California, having patterned its wiretap statute after the federal government, has one of the most restrictive statutes in the nation. Found in California’s Penal Code 629.50-.58 (Interception of Wire, Electronic Digital Pager, or Electronic Cellular Telephone Communications), the statute’s first restriction concerns who may apply for the wiretap. Unlike a traditional search warrant in which a law enforcement officer can directly submit an application to the court, applications for wiretap orders can only be submitted by either the Attorney General’s or District Attorney’s Office. This effectively positions CHES as a legally mandated mechanism law enforcement must use to secure any wiretaps for their investigations. The type of offenses for which wiretaps can be sought are limited to the most serious offenses, such as murder or terrorist activity. In terms of narcotics-related offenses, wiretaps can only be obtained if the amounts of drugs involved are greater than 3 pounds or 10 gallons.

Probable cause is the legal standard required for all search warrants. There must not only be probable cause to believe that an individual has committed or will commit one of the statutory offenses, but probable cause to believe that communications about these offenses will be obtained through the wiretap and specifically on the devices where the tap is to be placed. In the age of smart phones that offer a variety of methods for communication, this further means that probable cause must be specified for the belief that the additional applications within a phone will be used for communications, such as text messages or email. Most importantly, law enforcement must be able to demonstrate that normal investigative techniques (e.g. traditional surveillance methods, search warrants, informants) either failed, would be likely to fail, or would be too dangerous to employ. The restrictive nature of the California statute essentially mandates that a wiretap is the “investigative tool of last resort.” Law enforcement personnel must prepare an affidavit that shows the elements of probable cause and necessity are present.

What One Wiretap Entails for CHES: Even before a law enforcement officer has prepared an affidavit, it is highly likely he or she has already had contact with one of the CHES DDAs. Either the officer has previously sought wiretaps or is looking for assistance in preparing a first affidavit. Though it may be time-consuming, this informal consultation is preferred by the DDAs as it can actually save quite a lot of time during the overall review process. Because of their POST training and such consultation, the law enforcement officers who work with the CHES DDAs are aware of the standards they will need to meet if their wiretap applications are to go forward. But the DDAs are always prepared to share the latest “go bys” (samples that law enforcement can “go by” to craft their affidavits). Once law enforcement seeking a wiretap order has submitted an affidavit, the official review process begins. An affidavit can run anywhere from 30 to 100 pages and the DDA must carefully review it line by line. How long this will take heavily depends on the affiant and his or her writing skills. It can take as little as a few hours and as long as a couple of days to review an affidavit, especially if it requires contacting the law enforcement officer to request changes or clarify certain points.

Once the review is complete, the DDA will generate an internal memo, prepare any supporting documents that are required, order the application, and ensure there is command level personnel at the officer’s agency to sign off on the application. The application is then submitted to either the Head Deputy District Attorney or Assistant Head Deputy District Attorney of the Major Narcotics Division for review, with further review by the director, before the District Attorney does her final review. This process generally takes a total of 3-5 days, with a quicker turn around if it is an investigation the DDA is already familiar with. Given this rigorous review process, it is incumbent upon the DDA to be as diligent as possible in determining the application meets the necessary standards or it will only mean time lost in the process if the application requires further work.

After the wiretap order is obtained, the CHES DDAs are responsible for preparing a report, which is required every ten days that the wiretap is in effect. This report is reviewed by the judge designated to handle wiretap applications and basically must show that continuing the wiretap is necessary, such as whether the individual being surveilled is indeed using the tapped device and communications about offenses are being obtained. These reports are critical, because

despite the fact that a wiretap is valid for 30 days, a judge has the authority to shut down a wiretap at any time. Additionally, because of the 30 day limit on wiretaps, if a wiretap is yielding desired intelligence, extensions must be sought prior to the expiration of the order. Being granted an extension is more ideal than having to request another wiretap; it is easier than starting the application process anew, and it is also more cost-effective as phone companies will charge for each new tap. Yet an extension still requires fresh probable cause to be shown and is obviously time sensitive if the original order is not to be allowed to expire.

What Being a CHESS DDA Means: There is no question that being a part of CHESS is very labor intensive. The DDAs can handle multiple wiretap applications in a week, while also maintaining an independent workload of cases that involve trials, filings, handling non-narcotics-related wiretaps, and assisting in responses to motions to suppress evidence from wiretaps on other cases. The amount of work can be overwhelming, especially if we consider that the DDAs are essentially on call 24 hours a day because of the need for legal assistance at any given time on emergency applications for wiretaps. CHESS has a strong reputation for having high standards that shows in a track record of routinely having motions to have wiretap evidence suppressed denied by the court, which only increases the demand for their services. Additionally, federal agencies, particularly the Drug Enforcement Administration, seek wiretaps through CHESS because they can supply faster turnaround than federal courts and there is the ability in California to have warrants sealed, an option they do not have at the federal level.

Because of the demanding nature of meeting strict requirements for wiretaps and the heavy workload that is burdened by insufficient personnel, the DDAs essentially work around the clock and there is the additional pressure of knowing there really is little room for error. Mistakes made at the beginning or a lessening of standards can result in detrimental effects for prosecution of criminal cases if wiretap evidence is suppressed. To that end, applications must be “bulletproof” to ensure orders are granted and cases ultimately succeed. Only the very best of the DDAs can be considered for CHESS in order to ensure the survival of an overburdened, understaffed unit. There are ongoing concerns that the quality of work will suffer if the workload becomes too great. But, at its core, what it means to be a part of CHESS is to have a strong commitment to being part of the efforts against drug trafficking in Los Angeles County and undoing the damage that has been done to communities in the county.

Summary and Conclusions

CHESS was responsible for seeking 351 wiretap orders between 2013 and 2017, on average seeking six orders a month, and were extraordinarily successful in receiving those orders. 334 wiretap orders were obtained, amounting to 95% of orders sought actually being obtained. For those orders “not obtained,” this was largely due to suspects who had switched phones and therefore rendered the prepared applications invalid, requiring the CHESS DDAs to withdraw the applications in order to prepare new ones. That a seemingly low rate of prosecutions were initiated during this period belies the reality that investigations into large scale drug trafficking

and criminal operations that employ wiretaps are typically long-term operations that can take months, if not years, to result in criminal charges being filed.

The success of CHES in obtaining wiretap orders must be understood in the context of the highly restrictive statutory requirements of California wiretap law. To continually and successfully meet these high standards as CHES does is no easy feat, particularly when we consider the great demands that not only the process of reviewing applications and ensuring the continuity of ongoing wiretaps entails, but the heavy workload the DDAs must maintain around these duties. While a commitment to excellence has ensured the services of CHES are in greater demand than ever, the funding needed to secure the appropriate level of personnel to meet that demand has not been commensurate, especially when we consider that the number of wiretaps being sought has increased substantially in the past two years and is likely to do so again this year. In the end, CHES is indispensable to law enforcement efforts targeting large scale drug trafficking and criminal operations that plague Los Angeles County and warrant greater resources than they currently possess.

Chapter 6: TOUGH

Program Description

Project TOUGH (Taking Out Urban Gang Headquarters) was initiated in 2007 as a special unit within the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office with the purpose of nuisance property abatement. Abatement essentially seeks to decrease gang and other nuisance activity in the City of Los Angeles by removing the conditions at a property that allow chronic criminal activity, such as drug trafficking or unlawful firearm activity, to occur there and which has proven resistant to repeated law enforcement response (e.g. multiple arrests and search warrants). Strongholds for local gangs, such properties are prized for their additional ability to facilitate greater domination over communities. TOUGH relies on two sources for identification of nuisance properties. Law enforcement agencies, whether local, state, or federal, that have had prior experience with a property may refer it to TOUGH or a property can be referred to the unit through a complaint by someone in the community.

While TOUGH is considered an arm of the criminal branch of the City Attorney's office because criminal prosecutors are assigned to the unit, its primary methods for abatement entail civil remedies to achieve this objective through the filing of civil lawsuits. Lawsuits may be filed on one of three code violations. Under the Health and Safety Code Section 11570-11587, property abatement is allowed on the grounds of criminal activity surrounding the storage and sale of illegal narcotics at that property. California Civil Code Section 3479-3486 allows for abatement based on a wider array of criminal activities occurring at a property other than those solely concerning drugs. And under the Business and Professions Code Section 17200-17210 or Unfair Competition Law, unlawful business practices (e.g. allowing rental properties to be used in a manner that is in violation of any law) can be used as the basis to levy fines. Lawsuits typically seek an injunction against the property owner in order to require that certain improvements are made to the property and, in the case of rental properties or motels, management practices are adopted that will curtail the nuisance activity. Stay away orders may be issued to prevent individuals who are not the property owner from being at the property. TOUGH's use of property abatement is an effective tool at the disposal of at least the City of Los Angeles to target chronic offenders that impact the quality of life for Los Angeles communities.

Methodology

The current evaluation of TOUGH seeks to examine the unit's productivity and operations between July 2015 and December 2017. Two sources of data were employed for this assessment and are described below.

TOUGH Statistics: Statistics were provided for the period between July 2015 and the end of 2017 regarding the number of abatement procedures that had been initiated by TOUGH and the

number of injunctions that were obtained against property owners. Data was also obtained on the number of property closures and demolitions that were achieved, as well as whether the nuisance at the property was considered abated six months to a year after the abatement procedure.

Interviews with Key Personnel: Interviews were conducted with those personnel currently or previously working with TOUGH to provide an overview of TOUGH’s objectives and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the procedures that TOUGH prosecutors employ as part of the property nuisance abatement procedure.

Results

Understanding Nuisance Abatement Statistics

Between July 2015 and December 2017, TOUGH was responsible for initiating 40 property abatement procedures, averaging a little over one abatement procedure each month. During this period, no injunctions were sought nor were any properties subject to closure. One property was demolished, but this was not as a result of TOUGH litigation. Ultimately, of the 40 properties that were targeted by TOUGH, only three were not considered abated after the TOUGH prosecutor initiated some kind of action. One required the further involvement of the Los Angeles Police Department. Another property had been sold as and considered the solution to the nuisance issue, but the new property owner commenced selling illegal narcotics from the property. The final property has been transferred to a third party who is in the process of making the necessary changes to achieve abatement. The fact that all but three properties were considered abated indicates that TOUGH is an effective tool in the arsenal of efforts against drug trafficking and criminal operations in the City of Los Angeles. The following examines how TOUGH achieves its objectives without the need of injunctions or property closures.

When a nuisance property is referred to the TOUGH prosecutor, the first step is essentially to investigate whether independent records support the presence of nuisance behavior occurring at that property. This can be validated through the arrests and crime reports that have been made in conjunction with the property, as well as any evidence recovered there. This information is found in a property report, which is basically a “property rap sheet” that is not specific to one person, but to the criminal activity occurring at that particular location. There is no hard and fast rule as to the number of incidents at a location that the TOUGH prosecutor deems necessary for taking action. One key factor is that there has to be a recent and ongoing nuisance and at least one documented incident of an arrest or search warrant at the location. While three incidents in a year might be considered sufficient for initiating proceedings of some kind, there may be as few as one or two incidents. In those cases, the police are able to offer additional evidence that they see of gang activity at the location, such as field identification cards showing they have previously had contact with a gang member at a location.

While filing a lawsuit is certainly an option for the TOUGH prosecutor, it is not typically the first choice as sometimes there is not necessarily enough support for filing one. More commonly, however, this is simply due to the fact that most nuisance properties can be abated without requiring lawsuits. Far more common are the employment of two other methods for reaching out to property owners and seeking their cooperation in making the necessary changes to the property and its management:

Case Conferences: This entails meeting with the property owner, especially those who own rental properties, to alert them to the criminal activity that has been occurring at the property. The TOUGH prosecutor will inform the property owner of the improvements that will be required of the owner with the understanding that, if the owner does not comply or there is a reoccurrence of the nuisance activity, a lawsuit will be filed against the owner. These conferences are highly effective; as one prosecutor said, “Nine times out of ten they do as we tell them.”

Eviction Notices: When there is unlawful or nuisance activity that is originating from a single unit at a rental property such as an apartment complex, the TOUGH prosecutor will contact the property owner via a letter that details the type of activities occurring at the property. The owner will further be notified that eviction of the problem tenants from the property will be considered the solution to abating the nuisance at that location. Again, for property owners who do not actually live on the property and are unaware of what is happening at the property, this is usually effective as well. The TOUGH prosecutor will provide a “vacate” letter that the owner can bring to his or her attorney to start eviction proceedings against the problem tenants.

Injunctions, or stipulated judgements, may be entered into when all else fails with a property owner, but, as the statistics provided above attest to, this is rarely necessary. If an injunction is entered into with a property owner, the remedies sought regarding a property will depend on the severity of the nuisance, how long it has been occurring, and who are the individuals involved. If the property owner refuses to agree to an injunction, the TOUGH prosecutor will then file a motion for summary or default judgement and ask for the closure of the property for one year. With closure of the property, the dwelling must be boarded up and the property fenced in so that no one can be at the property. In lieu of closures, a “receiver” may be assigned to step into the role of owner when the owner will not do what has been stipulated. Demolition of properties are far rarer and only tend to occur if there has been closure of a property and the property has been breached more than a few times.

There are a myriad of improvements and changes to management practices that can be required of property owners. For physical improvement to the property, owners can be made to install better lighting and surveillance cameras, fencing, and otherwise secure the premises for those who live at the property. Beyond evicting problematic tenants, owners can be made to live on the property in the case of apartments and adopt more comprehensive screening of prospective tenants. Stipulations can be made that no narcotics or gang activity is allowed on the premises. In some cases, abatement will be considered achieved if the property owner sells the property to someone of whom TOUGH approves. Properties are monitored and property reports will tell the story of whether the nuisance activity continues at the location or has been abated. While

there can be no absolute guarantees that these remedies will completely eliminate problems at a particular property, the almost 100% success rate that TOUGH prosecutors have achieved in abatement of nuisance properties is testament to the fact that these remedies are more likely than not to be effective.

The issue of displacing the nuisance activity to a different location is real. Given that TOUGH contends with gang activity, it is inevitable that gangs will move their activity to different locations that remain in their turf. Being property-specific, property abatement can only occur one location at a time. But those prosecutors who have worked with TOUGH know they are making that particular location safe for neighbors to live in proximity of without fear of drive-by shootings and other criminal behavior that lessen their quality of life. They feel their work is truly meaningful, “making a difference in regular people’s lives every day, just wanting them to be able to live peacefully in a place and not have to be harassed or be faced with drug dealing gang members.” Ultimately, nuisance abatement represents an important tool for law enforcement that benefits the police by reducing how often they are called to a location. As one prosecutor said, “You can’t arrest your way out of the problem, that is why we do these abatements.”

The Greatest Challenge facing TOUGH

The primary challenge that faces TOUGH is the lack of a TOUGH prosecutor dedicated solely to L.A. IMPACT and able to work cases across the entire Los Angeles County. There are twelve attorneys in total assigned to TOUGH (what is now called CNAP: Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program). Originally there was one attorney dedicated solely to abating properties identified through L.A. IMPACT operations. As funds were continually decreased, the attorney assigned to L.A. IMPACT was assigned by the unit to other areas as well. The TOUGH prosecutor funded through the JAG grant currently works in in the Northeast Division of Los Angeles, having been transferred in March 2017 from the Southeast Division.

This lack of funding is compounded by the fact that, as Los Angeles City Attorneys, TOUGH prosecutors only have the jurisdiction to engage in property abatement within the City of Los Angeles. Though attempts were made at one point to have the TOUGH prosecutor cross-designated to work all of Los Angeles County, this did not occur. This means that the JAG-funded prosecutor has to have a Los Angeles County District Attorney or a city attorney from another city in order to file on nuisance property cases outside of the city. Clearly this is a limitation to the scope with which the collaboration between L.A. IMPACT with its countywide emphasis and TOUGH can be effective.

Summary and Conclusions

Between July 2015 and December 2017, the TOUGH prosecutor was responsible for initiating 40 nuisance property abatement procedures, for which none required a formal injunction order, but rather relied on case conferences with property owners and evictions to abate problems. The fact that only three properties were not considered abated during this time period offers strong

support for the effectiveness of TOUGH operations to compel property owners to address the issues afflicting their premises. These more informal actions seem to be enough inducement so that more serious legal actions, such as injunctions or summary judgments that will require the closure of the property for a year, are simply not necessary. When viewed in terms of effectiveness, abatement is a highly successful tool that law enforcement can avail itself of in its efforts against criminal operations that are decreasing the quality of life for neighbors of problem properties. Yet the funding for a TOUGH prosecutor who can be dedicated solely to abating properties as they relate to L.A. IMPACT operations is lacking and this collaboration is further restricted by the inability of City Attorneys to initiate proceedings outside of the City of Los Angeles. More funding to secure a prosecutor who will be able to devote attention to properties identified by L.A. IMPACT, as well as finding the means to allow that prosecutor to have county-wide jurisdiction would greatly increase the efficiency of using this highly effective resource.

Chapter 7: SYF

Program Description

The Sheriff's Youth Foundation (SYF) is a non-profit program created in 1985 and based on the belief that crime prevention programs that focus on youth are crucial to developing safer communities. In partnership with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, SYF helps young people in Los Angeles County stay off the streets and develop tools they need to succeed in life. The Sheriff's Youth Foundation's mission is to provide at-risk youth in communities with the highest rates of violence, drugs, and school drop outs with comprehensive outreach services.

At the heart of the SYF program are the Youth Academies (formerly Youth Activities League centers) spread across Los Angeles County. While there are 17 Youth Academies, currently only 16 are active because of the retirement of the Sheriff's Deputy assigned to the Avalon Academy, and an 18th Academy is currently being developed in Altadena. These Academies are open year-round, Monday through Friday, and provide a great number of activities. The participating Academies are:

1. Century Youth Academy - 7901 S. Compton Ave. LA, CA 90001
2. Century Boxing Youth Academy- 7116 Makee Ave LA, CA 90001
3. Compton Youth Academy - 700 N Alameda St. Compton, CA 90221
4. East Los Angeles Youth Academy- City Terrace Park, - East LA
5. Industry Youth Academy (YAL) - 4100 City Terrace Dr. LA, CA 90063
6. Lakewood Youth Academy - 21815 Pioneer Blvd. Hawaiian Gardens, CA 90716
7. Marina Del Rey Youth Academy - 5354 W 64th Street Inglewood, CA 90302
8. Norwalk Youth Academy - 14289 Telegraph Road Whittier, CA 90604
9. Palmdale Youth Academy - 8773 East Avenue R Palmdale, CA 93543
10. Mona Parks Youth Academy - 2291 E. 121st Street Compton, CA 90222
11. Pico Rivera Youth Academy- 9115 Belfour St. Pico Rivera, CA 90660
12. Santa Clarita Youth Academy- 30300 Arlington St. Val Verde, CA 91384
13. South LA Youth Academy- 19111 S. Vermont LA, CA 90304
14. Temple Youth Academy - 2236 Goodall Ave. Duarte, CA 91010
15. Walnut Youth Academy - 18500 Farjardo St. Rowland Heights, CA 91748
16. West Hollywood Youth Academy - 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood, CA 90069
17. Avalon Youth Academy – 215 Summer Ave., Avalon, CA 90704 (location currently inactive)
18. Altadena Youth Academy (currently working to activate this location)

The youth participating in these Academies are ages 7 to 17, over 90% are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and over half are below proficiency levels in core academic subjects. Youth in these communities face the threat of violence, the lure of gang life, and have limited resources and few positive options. Each academy, run by a Sheriff's Deputy or Sergeant and an SYF mentor or coach, offers youth a safe, supportive environment otherwise unavailable to them. According to the SYF website, "a Youth Academy is a place that provides fun and healthy things to do; it provides academic help; it provides guidance during times of need — and it provides direction,

motivation and hope for a positive future in situations that may otherwise seem bleak” (Sheriff’s Youth Foundation, n.d.)

The following core activities are offered to the youth who visit the Academies:

- Academics – youth work with mentors and tutors to complete homework and get help with other school work.
- Athletics – youth are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of sports offered throughout the year.
- Life Skills – youth participate in activities, such as cooking classes, beauty salons and barber shops, to teach them life skills, which will positively shape their futures.
- Community – youth take part in field trips and other activities which give them opportunities to have fun and contribute to their communities.
- Arts – youth are given opportunities to create and express themselves through art, which for many is not available at school.
- Fun and Recreation – youth are given many opportunities to just have fun, such as going on hikes, going to ball games, and playing games.

The overall goal of the program is to offer at-risk youth safe opportunities to develop the tools and skills they need to make healthy choices and succeed in life. Thus, the programmatic goals are to:

- Provide positive role models, including law enforcement officers.
- Provide academic tutoring.
- Provide drug awareness and prevention programs.
- Provide other activities to help youth develop important skills and have fun, including youth empowerment events, sports activities, field trips, and community events.

Methodology

Because SYF joined the DEEP team later than the rest of the entities, no evaluation plan was created for this program. However, based on conversations with both Directors of Programs, the following research questions were established:

- How many young people does SYF serve?
- Who are the youth being served?
- What types of activities does SYF provide to the youth who attend the Academies?
- How many deputies and youth attended the National PAL conferences?
- What effect have anti-drug messages had on youth?

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to answer these questions. A description of each of these data sources is described below. It is important to note, however, because the first Director of Programs was terminated and because evaluators had difficulty connecting with her before her termination, most of these data are descriptive in nature. However, the data discussed below do illustrate the large number of young people being served by this program

and the unique and varied activities they participate in. Therefore, these data can provide some insight into the program's productivity and effectiveness.

The following data sources are being used in the current evaluation of SYF:

Quantitative Data: SYF staff provided quantitative data on the number of youth who were served during the grant period, who they were, and what types of activities they participated in. While the grant covered 2016 and 2017, a great deal of this data was only provided for one year or the other.

Anti-Drug Pilot Program Survey: Some Youth Academies participated in an Anti-Drug Pilot Program. As part of this program, youth were given GoPro cameras to create their own Public Service Announcement about drug awareness topics. Evaluators created a survey to be administered to the youth participating in this program. The survey measures perceptions of the availability of drugs, use of drugs by family and friends, awareness of drug effects, and perceptions of self-efficacy. The intention of the evaluators was for the survey to be administered before and after the Program. However, because of the lack of communication with the previous Director of Programs the survey was administered without any consultation about the timing of that administration. Thus, the survey was administered only once, sometime after the beginning of the program. Because of the cross-sectional nature of the data, no causal attributions can be made, but the data can be used to describe the perceptions of program participants.

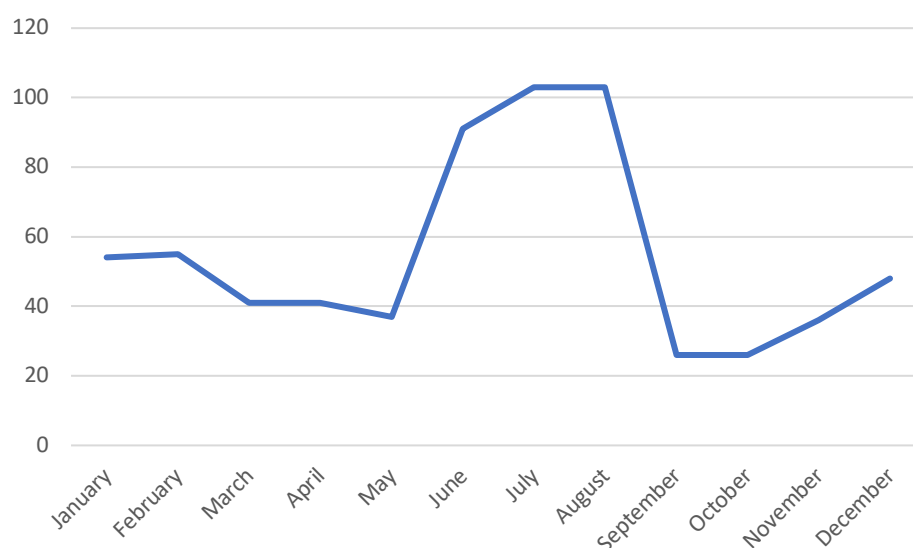
Interview with SYF Personnel: One interview was conducted with the current Senior Director of Programs. In addition to her current role, she was previously the Lead Program Coordinator at one of the Youth Academies. The interview content was used in the description of the program throughout this chapter and in the summary and conclusions.

Results

The Youth Academies situated throughout Los Angeles County have a large number of youth attending every day, serving thousands of youth during the school year and the summer. The Youth Academies provide a range of activities, including academic tutoring and a wide variety of sports. In addition to the regular activities provided, each Youth Academy hosts a Youth Empowerment event each month.

Figure 7.1 shows the average number of young people attending the Academies each day, by month, in 2017. These numbers range dramatically from one Academy to the next. For example, in January 2017, Century had an average of 125 youth per day, while Walnut had an average of approximately 20 per day. As the figure shows, each of the Academies sees an increase in attendance during the summer months.

FIGURE 7.1: AVERAGE NUMBER ATTENDING YOUTH ACADEMIES EACH DAY BY MONTH, 2017*



* Data for some Academies were not available for some months.

As stated above, beyond just going to the Youth Academies each day, youth participate in a variety of different activities. Some of these activities are year-round and some occur only during the summer months. For example, Sports Based Programs and Youth Empowerment events take place both during the school year and over the summer, while activities like Camp *COURAGE* and Life After High School occur only during the summer. Each of these are detailed below.

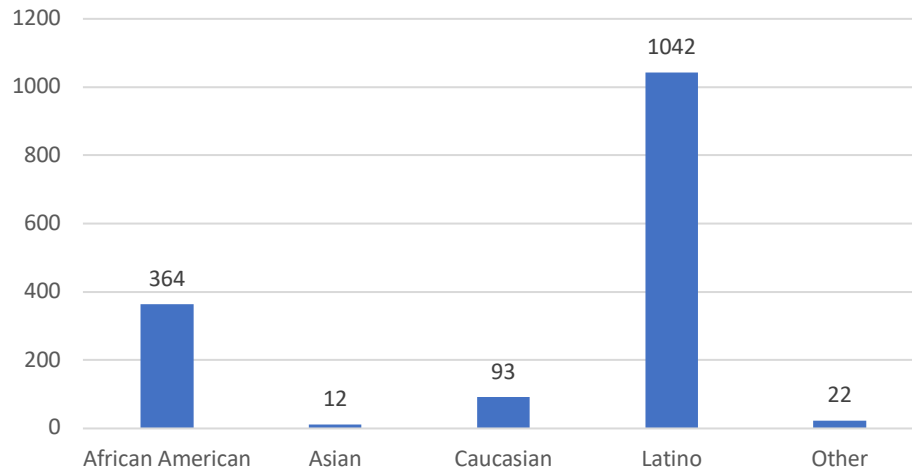
Academics

While youth have an opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities, the focus is on academics, particularly during the school year. The SYF website states “we passionately believe that if a young child is given the guidance and inspiration to enjoy and excel in the art of academics, it can profoundly impact every dimension in the trajectory of a life” (Sheriff’s Youth Foundation, n.d.). As a way of emphasizing academics, SYF has implemented the Sheriff’s Scholars program. Sheriff’s scholars are the most promising youth from the Academies who have been recommended by the Deputy Sheriffs. To be eligible, the youth must have a 3.3 grade point average, excel in all areas of high school life, make choices demonstrating a will to make a difference, have strong work ethics and accountability, and choose to live with integrity. These scholars are given unique opportunities to meet with Los Angeles leaders in business, education, and politics. They are also given access to a college counselor who can help them navigate the process of applying for college and scholarships. The intention of the program is to provide young people with the tools they will need to have a successful college experience.

Sports Based Program Participants

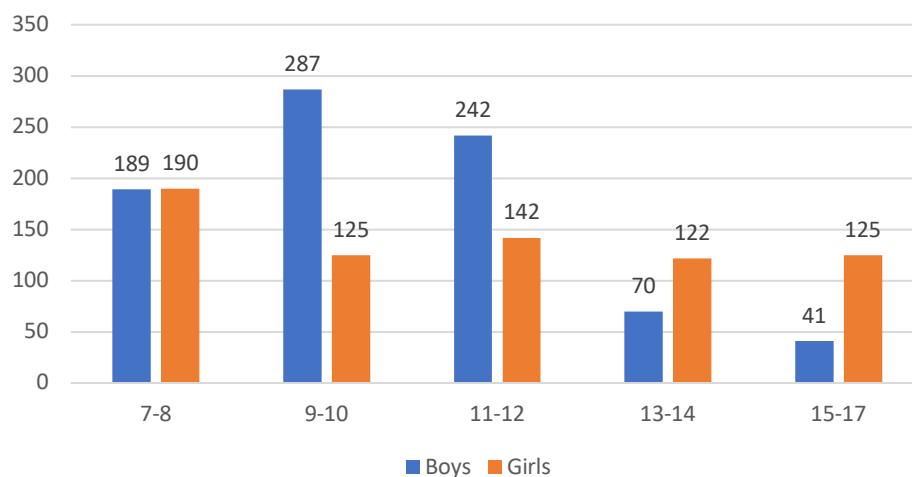
Each Youth Academy participates in many sporting activities during the school year and over the summer. While the data are available for 2015 and 2016 combined, in 2017 SYF partnered with Up2Us Sports Program who provided coaches for SYF youth. Because SYF was not directly overseeing sports participation, data was not collected in 2017.

FIGURE 7.2: RACE/ETHNICITY OF SPORTS BASED PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



A total of 1,533 youth participated in Sports during 2015 and 2016, including 829 boys (54%) and 704 girls (46%). Figure 7.2 shows the majority of youth participating in sports were Latino and only a very small percentage were Caucasian or Asian. In addition, Figure 7.3 shows that youth of all ages participated in sports, but most of the participants were below the age of 12. Interestingly, however, girls made up the majority of participants for the teenage groups.

FIGURE 7.3: AGE AND GENDER OF SPORTS BASED PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



Youth Empowerment

At Youth Empowerment events, youth come together to meet new friends, have fun, and learn from both peers and mentors. Activities and topics include ice breakers, guest speakers, youth leadership, teen talk, bullying info, drug awareness, community resources, and life skill advice classes. Each Academy puts on at least one Youth Empowerment event every month, and a few times a year all Academies come together for larger events. In 2016, there were three of these larger Youth Empowerment events, including one for boys, one for girls, and one co-ed event. One such event was a Girls Masquerade Party and another was a bowling event with an ex-drug offender as a guest speaker.



Also, on March 16, 2016 there was a teen Youth Empowerment Event held at the East LA Academy and City Terrace Park. Attendance included 80 youth from the Norwalk, East LA, South LA, Temple, Century, and Compton Academies. Attendance was primarily Latino and African American and approximately evenly split between boys and girls. In addition, 12 students from the University of Utah traveled to Los Angeles to volunteer at the Academies and speak to youth at this event. The youth had the opportunity to participate in discussions with the university students about getting into college and becoming successful there. Participants engaged in many activities before coming together for a donated dinner prepared with the help of Norwalk Academy youth.

In 2017, Youth Empowerment Programs were expanded with the creation of GEM (Girls Empowered Mentoring) and BROS (Boys Ready for Opportunities and Success). These programs provided group sessions, role models, and mentoring to develop inner strength and address specific needs and concerns of girls and boys.

Summer Programs

Each summer the Sheriff's Youth Foundation hosts summer programs at each of the Academies. The summer programs are similar to the school year programs; however, because of the longer hours there are more activities for youth to participate in, including:

- Tutoring and Reading
- Big Brother and Big Sister Club
- Sports/Games: Soccer, Baseball, Boxing, Basketball, Jujitsu, Game Room Activities, Tennis
- Life Skills: Beauty Club, Cooking, Computer Class
- Art: Arts & Crafts, Music, Dance
- Gardening
- Leadership Council

Table 7.1 shows the number of youth participating at each Youth Academy in the 2017 Summer Program. Overall, 1,850 youth participated in the 2017 summer programs, with the greatest number participating in Compton and the least in Marina Del Rey. Differences in size are due to a number of factors, including differences in space and number of volunteers, staff and deputies.

TABLE 7.1: YOUTH PARTICIPATING IN SUMMER PROGRAMS IN YOUTH ACADEMIES, 2017*

Youth Academy	Number of Youth
Century	350
Century Boxing	280
Compton	400
East LA	35
Industry	100
Lakewood	35
Norwalk	90
Marina Del Rey	15
Palmdale	40
Mona Park	20
Santa Clarita	65
South LA	325
Temple	30
Walnut	30
West Hollywood	35
Total	1850

* Data for 2016 were not available.

In addition to the regular summer programming at each of the Youth Academies, SYF youth also have the opportunity to attend special programs during the summer, including Camp *COURAGE* and Life After High School.

Camp COURAGE

Some youth have the opportunity to attend Camp *COURAGE* (Community Opposition and United Resistance Against Gang Evils), which is put on by the Industry Youth Activities League. Camp *COURAGE* is a three-day outdoor camp providing unique opportunities to develop and build skills and confidence, as well as experience true camping. Activities include night hikes, zip lining, high and low ropes, rock climbing, and team building activities.



The camp staff have described Camp *COURAGE* as three days of bonding, overcoming perceived limitations, and building motivation. In 2016, more than 60 youth participated, and in 2017 90 youth from 8 Youth Academies participated.

Life After High School

In addition, during the summer some youth participate in Life After High School, a program sponsored by the California Police Activities League. In the summer of 2017, a total of 35 youth and 14 adults from six Youth Academies attended the Life After High School program at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, including:

- East LA: (8 Youth and 3 Adults)
- Walnut: (6 Youth and 2 Adults)
- Temple: (6 Youth and 2 Adults)
- Industry: (4 Youth and 2 Adults)
- Lakewood: (7 Youth and 3 Adults)
- Palmdale: (4 Youth and 2 Adults)



This program gives teens from a range of Youth Academies the opportunity to travel to a California university in order to experience college firsthand. Participants stay overnight in the student dormitories, eat at university cafeterias, and attend classes and lectures during the day. The program is designed to lessen the shock factor of attending school away from home and to prepare youth for the transition to college. They attend short courses on budgeting, financial aid, interviews, college applications etc. According to SYF staff, the youth came back motivated to pursue a college education and armed with the knowledge of how to get there.

National Police Activities League Conferences

In both 2016 and 2017, SYF sent a combination of deputies, staff, and youth to the National Police Activities League annual conferences. This organization exists to prevent juvenile crime and violence by providing civic, athletic, recreational, and educational opportunities and resources to PAL Chapters.

In 2016, SYF registered 8 LA County Sheriff Deputies for a three-day conference in Florida put on by National Police Activities League, but it was unclear as to whether they actually attended. The conference was intended to help train the Sheriff's Deputies to better serve the youth at the Academies. In 2017, the SYF sent 6 staff and 5 youth to Maryland to the four-day National PAL Summer Summit. This conference was a "Mentoring Youth Summit" where youth participated in team building exercises and workshops on communication, making a difference, social media, and more. Deputies and SYF staff took the lessons learned back to their respective Academies to implement similar activities.

Anti-Drug Pilot Program

The Anti-Drug Pilot Program was administered in late 2016 at several Youth Academies. It was designed to provide middle and high school youth with the knowledge, tools, and resources to help them abstain from drug use and other negative behaviors, develop their ability to engage in positive, healthy behaviors, and keep them on the path towards a productive, safe, and enriching life. According to the proposal, the project provided dynamic education sessions, group activities, life skills development, a group project, resources, and mentorship. Activities were designed to build the skills necessary to resist drug use and empower youth to develop healthy attitudes and behaviors that lead to healthy choices.

The stated goals and objectives were for participants to:

1. Show an increase in their knowledge of negative effects of drugs.
2. Increase their confidence and positive self-identity to abstain from drug use and other negative and unhealthy choices.
3. Increase their resiliency skills.
4. Identify and develop a strong support system.

As part of the Anti-Drug Pilot program, the Sheriff's Youth Foundation purchased GoPro cameras and laptops for the Youth Academies. The participants used the cameras and laptops to create public service announcements related to drug awareness.

As part of the evaluation, the participating youth were given a survey to measure drug/alcohol availability and awareness. As stated above, the survey was not administered as the evaluators intended, so there is no pre- and post-project data. In total, 111 youth completed the survey. Table 7.2 reports the descriptive statistics for the demographic variables. These data show that slightly more than half of the participants were male, almost three-quarters were Latino and the average age was approximately 13 years old.

TABLE 7.2: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

	<i>f</i>	%
Sex		
Male	58	52.7
Female	52	47.3
Race/Ethnicity		
Latino	78	73.6
African American	19	17.9
White	2	1.9
Other	7	6.6
	Mean	Range
Age	13.3	7 to 19
Grade	8.7	1 to 12

One of the purposes of the survey was to measure perceptions of the availability of alcohol and drugs and the extent to which drugs and alcohol were present in the lives of their family and friends. The survey asked, "If someone your age wanted to get some beer, wine or hard liquor, how easy would it be for them to get some?" Similar questions were asked for marijuana and other illegal drugs. Figure 7.4 shows that most youth feel it is *very hard* for someone their age to get alcohol, marijuana and other illegal drugs.

FIGURE 7.4: PERCENT REPORTING IT WOULD BE *VERY HARD* TO OBTAIN SUBSTANCE

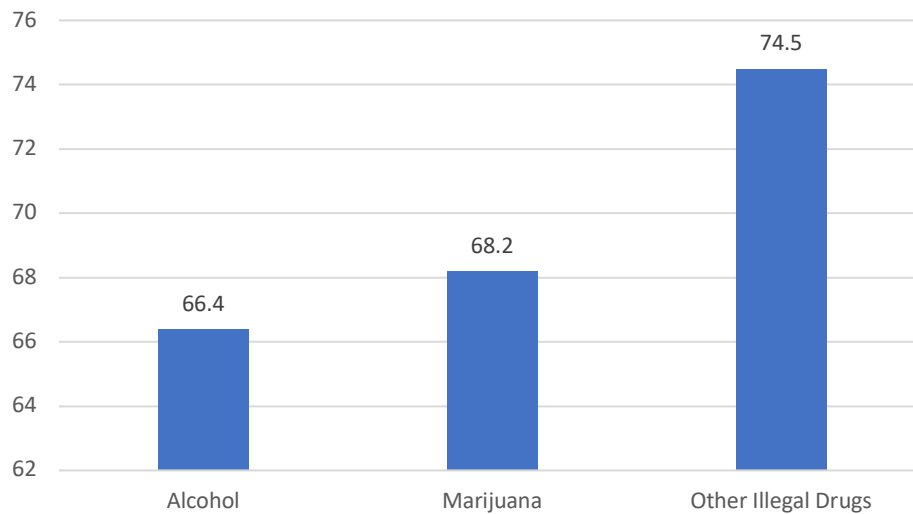
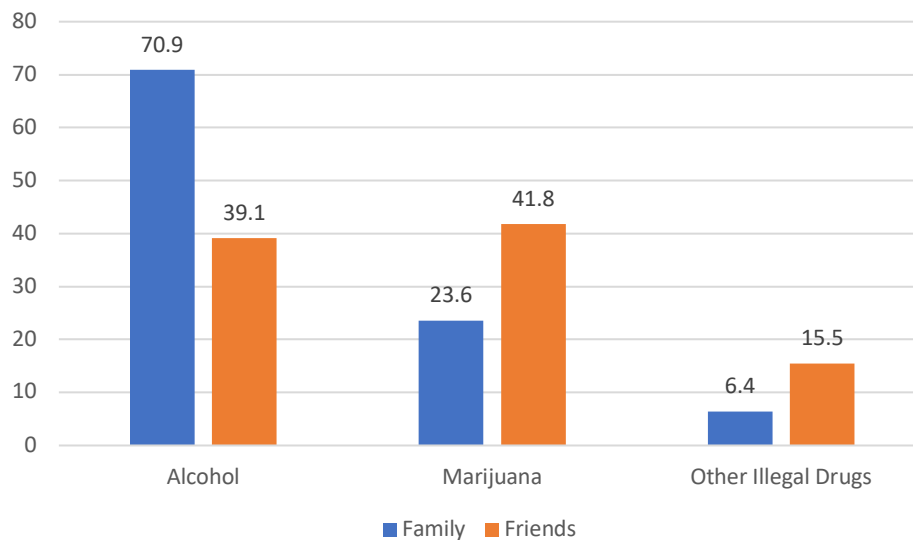


Figure 7.5 shows that, with the exception of family using alcohol, a majority of participants did not have family or friends who used any kind of substances in the last year. While most youth did not have friends who used any substances (all percentages are below 50%), the data still show that approximately 40% of participants have friends who used alcohol and marijuana.

FIGURE 7.5: PERCENT REPORTING FAMILY AND FRIENDS USED SUBSTANCE IN LAST YEAR

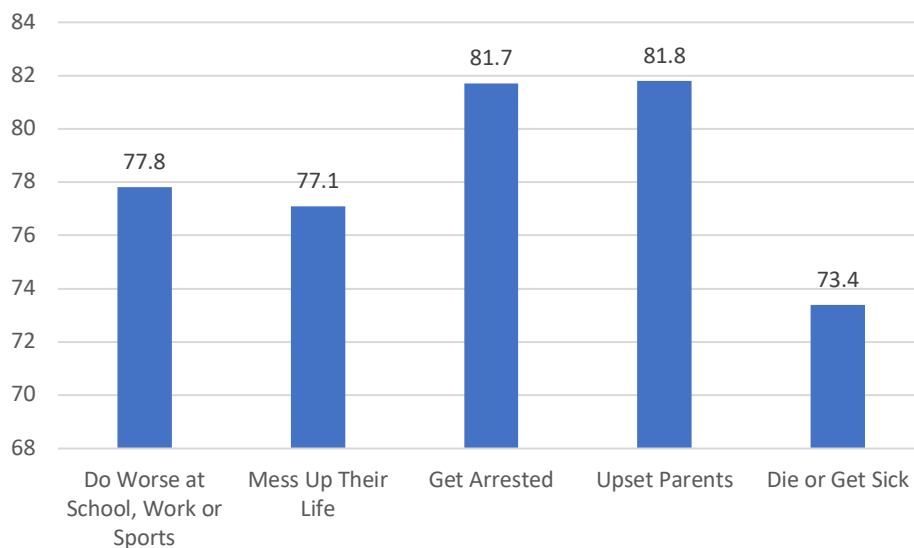


Further, chi-square analyses show that when family members use a substance, participants are significantly more likely to have friends that use as well. For example, for participants who have family members who have smoked marijuana in the last year, 88.5% of them also have friends who used marijuana in the last year. In contrast, of those participants who had no family members who used marijuana, only 27.4% had friends who used marijuana ($\chi^2=30.445$, $p<.001$). In other words, when young people have someone around them using drugs, they are likely to

have multiple people around them using drugs. While the data does not measure personal use, having these influences in their lives makes it more likely they themselves will also use alcohol or drugs.

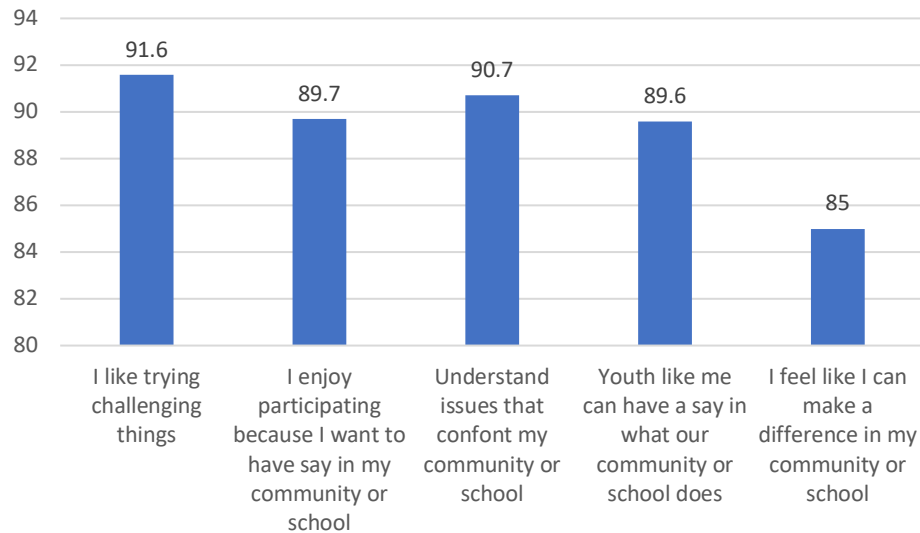
One of the objectives of the project was to increase knowledge of the negative effects of drugs, therefore the survey also measured youth perceptions of these effects. Respondents were asked how likely they thought problems were to occur when someone uses illegal drugs. As Figure 7.6 shows, *more than three quarters* of respondents said they thought it was likely a young person doing illegal drugs would do worse at school, work or sports, mess up their life, get arrested and upset their parents; and just under three quarters stated that a person using illegal drugs would be likely to die or get sick. It is clear the youth were aware of negative outcomes associated with using alcohol and drugs. Interestingly, chi-square analyses indicate that those participants who have people in their lives who use illegal drugs are no more or less likely to perceive these risks.

FIGURE 7.6: PERCENT SAYING IT IS *LIKELY* ILLEGAL DRUGS CAUSE PROBLEMS



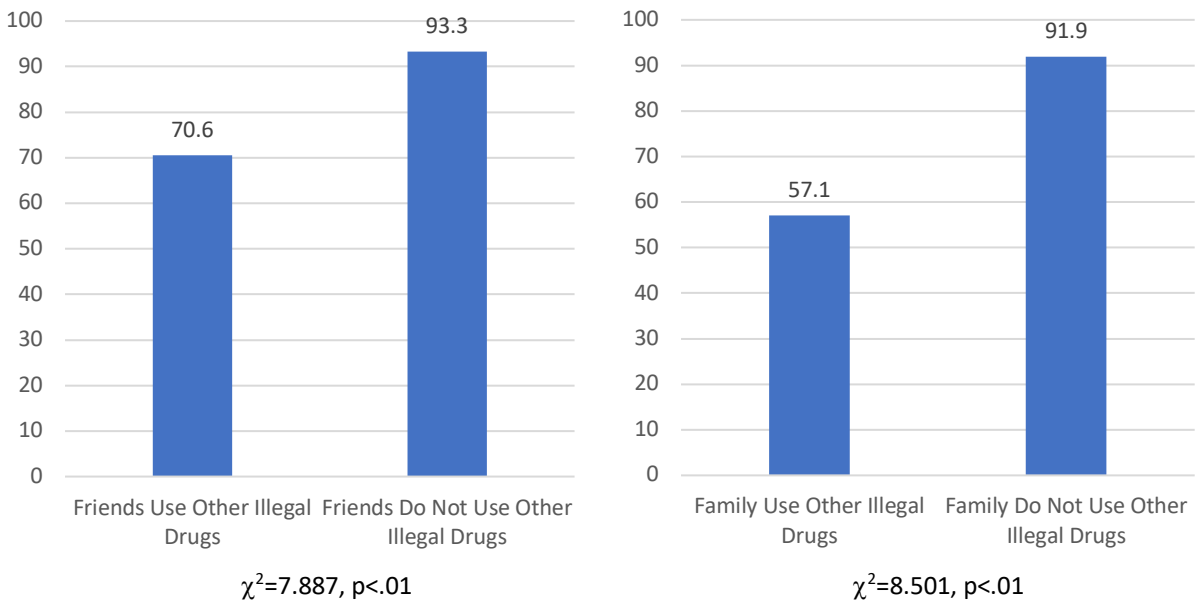
Finally, the youth were asked a number of Likert scale questions designed to measure their self-efficacy, or their ability to effect change in their school or community. Figure 7.7 shows that the vast majority of participants like to be challenged, participate in events and feel like they can make a difference in their community or school.

FIGURE 7.7: PERCENT OF PARTICIPANTS WHO AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS



While clearly the vast majority of participants felt they could have an effect on what happens in their community and school, there were differences between students. Chi-square analyses indicate that for several of these measures, fewer participants believed they could have an impact on their community or school if they had family and friends who used drugs. For example, Figure 7.8 shows that for participants who did not have friends who used illegal drugs other than marijuana, 93.3% believed they had a say in what their community or school does. In contrast, for those who had friends who used drugs, this number dropped down to 70%.

FIGURE 7.8: PERCENT WHO AGREE THEY HAVE A SAY COMMUNITY/SCHOOL



Similarly, for those respondents whose family did not use illegal drugs, approximately 92% said they thought they had a say in what their school does. But, for those whose family members did use drugs, only 57% thought they had a say. While the exact cause cannot be ascertained with this data, it does suggest that young people who are surrounded by people who use drugs, are less likely to think they can make a difference.

Overall, these data from the Anti-Drug Project show:

- Most respondents feel alcohol and drugs are very difficult to obtain.
- Most respondents have family who have used alcohol in the last year. This, however, is not surprising given that many family members are old enough to legally drink alcohol.
- Most respondents did not have family or friends who used marijuana or illegal drugs in the last year. However, having a family member who used drugs made it more likely that a respondent would also have a friend who used drugs.
- Most respondents are aware of the problems that can arise from using drugs, and this awareness is not impacted by having family or friends who use drugs.
- Most respondents agree they and other youth like them can have an impact on their community and school. But this was affected by whether they had family and friends who use marijuana and other illegal drugs. For some measures, youth who have family and friends who use substances are less likely to feel they can have an impact on their community

Because of the way in which the survey was administered, it is not possible to say the Anti-Drug Project and GoPro exercise led to the positive results, but it does suggest that those involved in the program were, overall, experiencing positive outcomes. It is important to note, however, that for those who have family and friends who use substances, the outcomes may not be as great.

Summary and Conclusions

The Sheriff's Youth Foundation is a non-profit organization that provides comprehensive outreach services to at-risk youth in Los Angeles County. In 2016 and 2017, SYF provided a safe, supportive environment and a wide range of activities for a large number of youth. These activities include academic tutoring and homework help, sports programming, youth empowerment, summer programming, Camp COURAGE and Life After High School. These activities not only help teach youth important skills and provides opportunities for fun, but they also help create positive relationships between the youth, their families and law enforcement. The quantitative and qualitative data reported above suggest SYF is a productive and effective program that supports the many youth who have access to their programming. The data provided by SYF show that more than 1,500 youth participated in sports based programs during 2015 and 2016, and 1,850 youth participated in summer programs in 2017. These numbers show that SYF is in great demand by youth and their families in Los Angeles County. The survey data from the Anti-Drug Pilot Program show that the youth being served by this program are aware

of the negative effects of drugs and feel empowered in their communities and schools. However, the data also show that for those youth who have people in their lives that use drugs, they are less likely to feel they can make a difference.

The qualitative data suggest SYF is effective as well. When asked how she knew SYF was successful, the Director of Programs referred to the fact that the youth stay in the program for so long. Many of the youth start coming to the Academies when they are 7 and are still coming when they are teenagers. She said, “we see pictures of the same kids from being young to being teenagers. I see how it means so much to them. They are driven to want to be successful.” She also said that the SYF staff and Sheriff’s Deputies “are really involved and have a lot of pride.”

In order to remain effective, SYF will need to address several issues. First, the Programs Director mentioned in her interview that the mentor to youth ratio is too high. Some Youth Academies have more than a hundred kids coming each day, which can put a strain on the resources available. More funding in the form of grants and donations is needed to hire more staff. Second, in order to continue to ensure SYF is adhering to best practices, more comprehensive data collection procedures are in order. The fact that some data was not available to us was a direct result of the turnover in the position of Director of Programs and could not be helped. However, better infrastructure built around data collection may help to prevent this problem when shifts in personnel occur.

Chapter 8: PD-JMHL

Program Description

The Public Defender Jail Mental Health Liaison Program (PD-JMHL) is an interagency collaboration between the Public Defender's office, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH). The program is designed to enable more efficient, holistic legal representation of detained mentally ill clients housed at the county jail. The introduction of a social worker, working in conjunction with the Public Defender's office, is the key to this process.

The idea for this program started with a series of conversations about what Public Defender attorneys needed to better represent their clients who are mentally ill. Initially their plan was to have a team of social workers, a paralegal who could help with data entry and analysis, and an attorney to oversee the process. While they only received funding for one social worker, in June 2016 their vision was put into practice with the social worker being placed at the Twin Towers Correctional Facility. When clients are referred to the program, the social worker, when requested by the attorney, assists the client as needed. At present, the PD-JMHL program is only available to attorneys assigned to the Airport and Lancaster courts. The program has not been widely announced to other courts because there is currently only one social worker. However, when attorneys from other courts have requested the help of the social worker, they have not been denied.

Potential clients are identified in a number of ways:

- Deputy Public Defender attorneys identify clients who are in custody and are suspected of having mental health concerns that may impact their criminal case. The majority of clients are referred to the program in this way.
- Clinicians working for the DMH may approach the social worker about an inmate. If the inmate is a client of the Public Defender, the attorney will be contacted.
- Sheriff's Deputies working with the inmates may also approach the social worker about an inmate. If the inmate is a client of the Public Defender, the attorney will be contacted.

In all of these cases, however, the Attorney will determine whether or not to make a referral to the JMHL Project.

The social worker, who began in January 2016, is assigned to the Twin Towers Correctional Facility (and travels to other facilities as needed). Upon referral to the program, the social worker may provide assistance in a number of ways, including: serving as a liaison between the client and Public Defender assigned to the case when needed; documenting the participant's behavior and possible symptoms of mental illness; closely monitoring the participant's mental and physical well-being while in the jail; developing mechanisms to communicate with LASD custodial

personnel and DMH staff responsible for monitoring the participant; assisting and facilitating the linkage of participants to appropriate mental health programs, including mental health treatment within the jail, appropriate housing within the jail, and Regional Center services and community-based mental health programs; interviewing collateral contacts such as family, relatives and friends for the primary purpose of facilitating the participant's transition back into the community; educating the participant about mental illness, its effects and treatment; and collaborating with DMH personnel and other stakeholders in identifying and developing re-entry plans that address the psychosocial needs of participants upon their release from custody.

However, the social worker's specific role in each case will be dependent on the goal the attorney states and the information the social worker can gather to assist in reaching this goal. The social worker works at the direction of the attorney and is covered under the attorney-client rules of confidentiality and privileged communications. There have been three different social workers that filled this role over the course of the grant.

In the PD-JMHL program, the social worker acts as a liaison between the attorney and the client with the goal of more quickly moving the client out of the criminal justice system. Thus, more specific programmatic goals include:

- A reduction in the number of court miss-outs and the length of time it takes to get clients to court.
- A reduction in the length of stay in jail for mentally ill clients.
- The diversion of clients to treatment programs, hopefully preventing clients from returning to jail.

The above stated goals are all related: a reduction of court miss-outs will lead to early resolution and diversion of cases. This, in turn, should result in greater likelihood of successful transfer of inmates to community treatment centers, allowing them to get the treatment they need, help them to more successfully re-enter their communities, and be less likely to recidivate. These will all, in turn, lead to a reduction of the costs associated with missed court dates and daily bed space at the jail.

Methodology

In order to assess the productivity and effectiveness of the PD-JMHL Program, the overarching research questions framing the current evaluation included:

- How many clients were referred to the PD-JMHL program?
- What were the primary reasons for referrals to the program?
- How many court miss-outs were there?
- What was the average length of time for resolution or diversion of cases?
- How many clients were transferred to community programs for treatment and other re-entry services?

- What were the experiences of attorneys regarding the effects of the program?

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to answer these questions. A description of each of these data sources is described below.

PD-JMHL Database: The Public Defender's office created a database designed for data collection on various measures. Data was collected from each client upon their first meeting with the social worker. These data include referral intake information, demographic variables, reason for referral, goals of attorney, current client jail housing location, and criminal charge. On a regular basis, the social worker input data into the project database for all relevant measures, including (when appropriate): housing transfers, behavioral issues, community linkages, and efforts undertaken by the social worker on behalf of the participant (meetings, contacts with family and friends, in-house treatment referrals, preparation of reentry plans). The database allows for extensive notes taken by the social worker, so much of the data available in this database is in narrative form. The database includes client contacts from January 2016 through December 2017. While the database was not completed until June 2016, client contacts between January and June 2016 were added to the database upon its completion.

Case Studies: The data in the PD-JMHL database were also used to tell the stories of two clients who had successful outcomes. These case studies are used to take a closer look at individuals and what their experiences have been with the program over time to try to identify those factors that appear to be related to their successful outcomes.

Interviews with PD-JMHL Staff and Attorneys: One interview was conducted with a supervising social worker who has been involved since the inception of the program. She provided a general overview of the program and its goals. In addition, two Deputy Public Defenders involved in the program were interviewed regarding their experiences working with mentally ill clients since the beginning of the PD-JMHL program and how these experiences have changed over time.

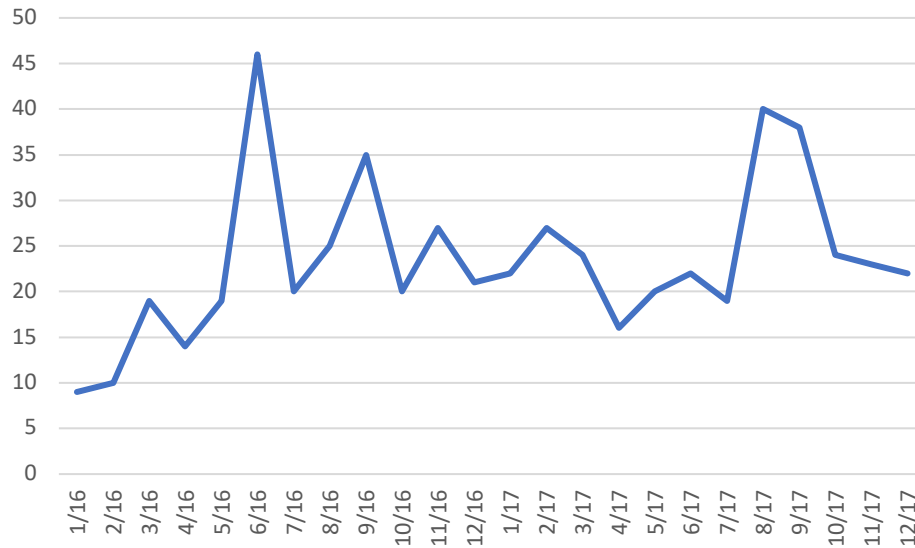
Because pre-program data were not available on relevant measures, we are not able to claim causal relationships between the program and outcomes. However, process measures are assessed and, through qualitative data, we measure the extent to which attorneys perceive the program to have helped them more effectively represent their mentally ill clients.

Results

PD-JMHL Database

Between January 2016 and December 2017, a total of 562 clients were referred to the PD-JMHL program by their attorneys. The number of referrals varied by month, starting small with only 9 and 10 referrals in the first two months of the program and reaching over 40 in some later months (see Figure 8.1). Overall, the average per month was approximately 26 referrals.

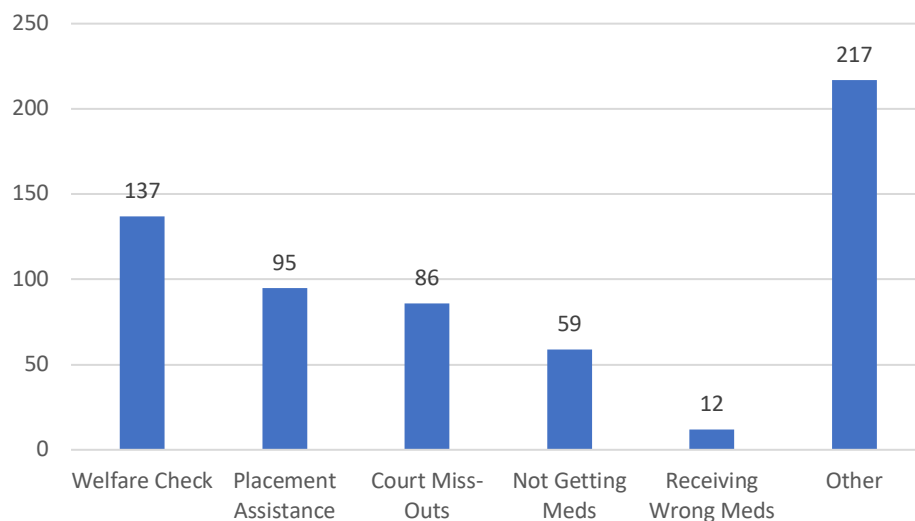
FIGURE 8.1: REFERRALS BY MONTH



The mean age of these mentally ill clients was 35.4, with ages ranging between 18 and 75. The charges against these clients included violent crimes (such as murder, aggravated assault, and sexual battery), property crimes (such as burglary, arson, and vandalism) and drug crimes (including possession and drug sales/transportation).

The reasons for referrals to the PD-JMHL Program varied, with some clients being referred for multiple reasons. Of those with an identified reason, the most common was for a welfare check, where the social worker was asked by the attorney to check on the well-being of the client (see Figure 8.2).

FIGURE 8.2: ATTORNEY REFERRALS BY REASON



Note: Total is more than 562 because many clients were referred for multiple reasons.

Other common reasons given for referrals were court miss-outs, placement assistance and clients not receiving their medications. The 'Other' designation, while quite large, includes those cases where a reason for the referral was not identified.

Table 8.1 shows that more than 70% of clients are assigned to attorneys at the Airport or Lancaster courts. This is not surprising given the program was officially announced only to these two courts. However, as the table clearly shows, 26% of referred clients have attorneys from other courts around the county as well. This suggests that the services of the social worker are desired throughout the county and that she has made herself accessible even given her limited time.

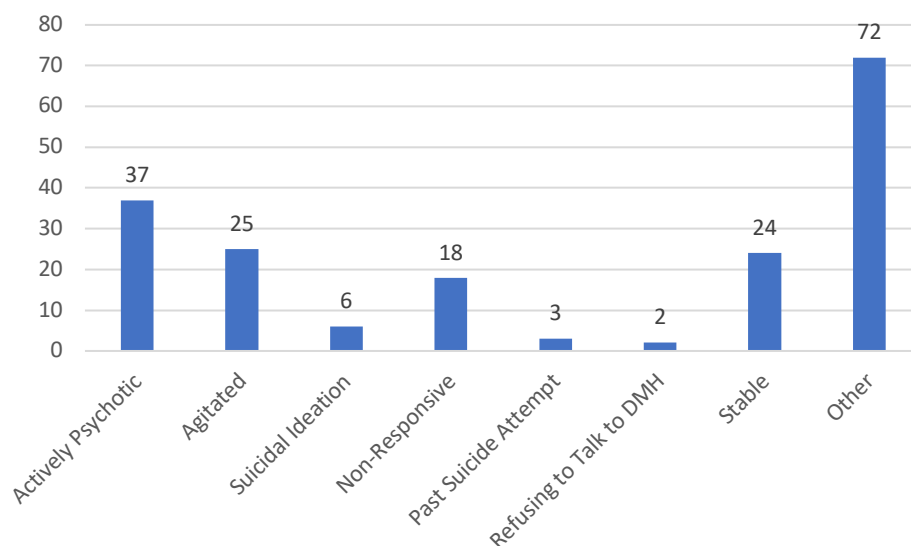
TABLE 8.1: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF REFERRALS PER COURT

Assignment Location	Frequency	Percent
Airport	226	41.47
Lancaster	174	31.93
Clara Shortridge Foltz	45	8.26
Van Nuys	23	4.22
Long Beach	14	2.57
Pasadena	9	1.65
Torrance	8	1.47
Other	46	8.44
Total*	545	

* The 'Other' category includes all courts that were used less than 1% of the time, including: Alhambra, Bauchet, Bellflower, Burbank, Chatsworth, Compton, East Los Angeles, El Monte, Hall of Records Juvenile Headquarter, Inglewood Juvenile, Los Padrinos, Mental Health, Metropolitan, Norwalk, Pomona, San Fernando, Sylmar and West Covina.

While in custody, clients exhibited a number of mental health behaviors that were brought to the attention of the social worker and recorded in the dataset. These client behaviors are relevant in that they could have an impact on the resolution of cases as well as the interactions they have with their attorneys, the social worker, mental health professionals, and Sheriff's Deputies and other jail staff. These mental health behaviors included being actively psychotic, agitated, unresponsive, and suicidal. Figure 8.3 shows the most frequent identified behavior is being actively psychotic. The 'other' category includes many unspecified behaviors (i.e., just identified as 'other') and other behaviors including depression, being delusional and catatonic.

FIGURE 8.3. MENTAL HEALTH BEHAVIORS OF MENTALLY ILL CLIENTS



Between January 2016 and December 2017, the social worker had 3,724 interactions with various entities and individuals on behalf of the 562 clients referred to the program. These include in-person, phone, and email interactions. Table 8.2 shows that nearly half of these interactions were with public defender attorneys and staff. This number clearly shows that the social worker spends almost half of her day being responsive and available to attorneys, so they can better serve and meet the needs of their clients. In addition, the social worker interacts extensively with DMH and DHS, indicating that she is assuring that the mental health needs of the clients are being addressed while in custody and working to link them to community services to help make the reentry transition more successful. The number of interactions with Regional Center and other community services also demonstrates the social worker's dedication to finding placements and services for clients once they are released from custody.

TABLE 8.2. NUMBERS OF INTERACTIONS BY TYPE

Interaction	Frequency	Percent of All Identified Interactions
Public Defender Staff	1565	48.5
DHS/DMH	745	23.1
Client	477	14.8
Sheriff	149	4.6
Regional Center	82	2.5
Jail Linkage	66	2.0
Community Services	60	1.9
Family	55	1.7
Jail Staff	21	.7
Other	8	.2
Total	3228	

For most clients, there is no data on length of incarceration or number of days for a case to be completely resolved. However, the number of days a case was open in the PD-JMHL program was recorded. The mean number of days a case was open was 38.9, with a range from 1 to 419 days. There were 15 cases open for more than 200 days and four were open for more than a year. There are many reasons that a case may be closed in the PD-JMHL program. A case closure may indicate that a client was released from jail, was linked to a community organization, or simply that the social worker was no longer needed. The exact reason for a case being closed is not always clear from the dataset as there is no direct measure of this.

Another of the program goals was to move clients more quickly out of jail and into a community program that could assist with their mental health and reentry needs and, therefore, reduce recidivism. During this time period, a total of 56 clients were linked to a community program. The average number of days incarcerated for these 56 clients was 106, with a range of 9 to 362 days. The community programs that received these referrals included: 2nd Chance Recovery, Full Service Partnership Programs (FSP), Group Homes, Los Angeles County-University of Southern California Hospital, Los Angeles Men's Place Community (LAMP), Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR), Outpatient counseling, Pacific Asian Counseling, Palmdale Mental Health, Penny Lane, Project 180, Regional Center, Still Waters Recovery, Substance Abuse Programs, Veteran's Affairs and, Volunteers of America.

While the goals of the program include a reduction in court miss-outs, reduction in incarceration time, and increase in the number of clients being linked to community services, it is not possible to test for these changes because no pre-program data is available. What these data from the PD-JMHL database do suggest, however, is that the social worker housed at Twin Towers is heavily relied upon to assist attorneys in ensuring that clients receive necessary legal, mental health, and reentry services. While the quantitative data can answer some of the research questions, the qualitative data in the sections below can help us to better examine changes that may have occurred since the beginning of the program.

Case Studies

In late 2016 a woman charged with vandalism, who had previously been on a 9-day mental health hold, was referred to the PD-JMHL program to help with placement assistance. With the help of the social worker, who was also in contact with the family, the attorney was able to get her placed in a substance abuse program and released from jail within 15 days of being referred to the program. While not all clients are this successful and not all cases are resolved so quickly, it is helpful to more thoroughly examine the experiences of clients to help identify what factors may be related to their successful outcomes. To this end, the data contained in the PD-JMHL database are also used to do a more in-depth analysis of two brief case studies. These case studies help demonstrate more fully the way the social worker is utilized to help the attorneys serve their clients in a more effective way and provide examples of the ways in which the social worker collaborates with the Department of Mental Health, community programs and the clients' families to help clients receive the services they need.

While the cases described below are used to more fully illustrate how the program works, it should be noted that every case is unique and has a different outcome. These two cases represent “success stories,” but there are also cases that do not end in such positive ways. However, as reported in the interview section below, success comes in many different forms for these clients.

Case Study #1: A 24-year old man, who was charged with burglary and failing to report to probation, was referred to the program for placement assistance. The client stated that he suffered from paranoia and schizophrenia and occasionally experienced auditory hallucinations. The client also stated that he had a substance abuse problem and that he used crack cocaine. The social worker was asked to look up any prior contacts with the Department of Mental Health or other mental health agencies and look into a potential course of mental health treatment. The client was facing a 6-year prison sentence for the failing to report to probation charge.

As requested by the attorney, the social worker asked to have jail linkage staff assigned to assist with placement and requested his DMH records to see where he had been treated before. The jail linkage staff, in consultation with the social worker and the attorney, made a referral to a substance abuse treatment center. The client was accepted to this treatment center and would be admitted if the judge agreed to release him on probation. The attorney contacted the social worker requesting a letter from the treatment center, so the judge could see that he would be receiving treatment if given probation. The social worker obtained the letter and sent it to the attorney. The judge released the client who was then taken to the substance abuse treatment center.

Overall, the client was in the PD-JMHL program for 49 days. During that time, the social worker recorded 30 contacts with various individuals and organizations, including contacts with the client, jail linkage staff, community organizations, Department of Health Services, and the Deputy Public Defender. This case clearly shows the collaboration between the Public Defender’s office, jail linkage staff, and community organizations, working together to help the client obtain the services he needed. Instead of being sentenced to six years in prison, this client was released to a community organization in order to obtain substance abuse treatment.

Case Study #2: A 43-year old man charged with criminal threats, was referred to the program for placement assistance. The client had a long history of psychosis and bipolar disorder, having had his first psychotic break in 2010. Then, in 2013 the client suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury after falling off a 15-foot ladder. According to his sister, the symptoms appeared to have been exacerbated by this injury and he had his second psychotic break in 2015. In an email to the social worker, the attorney stated that she thought the client did not need prison or any more custody time. She stated her goal was to have him released to a program that would help him maintain his medication and treatment, which should be possible because he didn’t have any record.

The social worker first interacted with the client to attempt to get him to sign release papers. The client eventually did this, but the social worker stayed and talked with him for over an hour.

The social worker said it was clear the client wouldn't sign the paper until he trusted her. He talked to the social worker about his past, his moves from state to state and how he ended up in Los Angeles. By letting him vent about his situation the social worker was able to get him to sign the release, which made it possible for the attorney to move forward with the best possible plan.

In the 49 days that the client was part of the PD-JMHL program, the attorney relied on the social worker in many ways, as evidenced by their many interactions with each other and other individuals and organizations. During this time, the social worker worked extensively with the family to ensure the client was receiving the help he needed. For example, she worked with the client's mother to help the attorney obtain past hospitalization, therapy, and medical records. On behalf of the attorney, she also spoke with the client's sister numerous times about the client and how to best help him.

In addition, the social worker spent a great deal of time with this client. On at least two occasions she spent over an hour with the client trying to reassure him and answer his questions. While the social worker emphasized that she did not have this much time to spend with every client, she believed the client was getting more despondent, so she needed to increase her visits to him. She also got a clinician to meet with the client so he had someone else to speak to and was getting the help he needed.

In all, the social worker had 85 recorded contacts with various individuals on behalf of this client. These included interactions with the client, DMH clinicians, the Public Defender and over 40 interactions with the client's family. This collaboration between the attorney, social worker, clinicians and especially the family helped to get the client admitted to a treatment facility and hopefully on his way to recovery.

These brief case studies illustrate the dedication and accessibility of the social worker, and the value, for both the client and attorney, of having her placed in the jails cannot be overstated. It would not be possible for the Deputy Public Defenders to spend this much time gaining the trust of these clients or talking with their family. It is clear that these interactions helped move the clients through the legal process so they could be released and receive treatment in the community.

Interviews

Three interviews were conducted after the end of the three-year grant period. A supervising social worker involved with the program since its inception was interviewed to get a "big picture" look at how the program started and how it works. In addition, two attorneys from Airport Court involved in the PD-JMHL program were interviewed. The attorney perspective is crucial to understanding the benefit and success of the program on a day-to-day basis. Each of these interviewees was asked about the primary goals of the program, the most important features of the program, how things have changed, what a success story looks like, and suggestions for improvement.

Program Goals and Important Features: According to the supervising social worker, the overall goal of the PD-JMHL program is to more effectively assist the most vulnerable of Public Defender clients—the mentally ill. The presence of the social worker in the jail allows for the attorney to have “real time help” with mentally ill clients they can’t get to very easily. The availability of the social worker to meet with the client, talk directly to the clinicians and Sheriff’s Deputies who regularly see the clients, and communicate this information back to the attorney helps to more effectively meet the needs of the clients. More specifically, this collaboration can help reduce court miss-outs so cases can be resolved more quickly, help clients get on the right medications, make sure that those who need it are getting substance abuse treatment, and help divert clients into programs that will help to reduce recidivism rates among this population.

Similarly, according to one of the attorneys, the main goal is to “fill the gap” between the client and the attorney. She said “even if I go to the jail, and it is hard for me to have time to go to the jail, I still can’t do what she can do. She’s on the floors, she can go to the unit, she can talk to the treating clinician or the case manager . . .” In fact, the presence of the social worker at Twin Towers was seen as the most important feature of the program by all interviewees. The supervising social worker stated that the most unique and important aspect of the program is that the social worker is “running around the jail like an employee” and that the program is now just part of the fabric of Twin Towers. One of the attorneys stated that the social worker serving as a liaison made his job easier because “we can’t be there.” The other attorney stated that “it’s like having a piece of me in jail.” She stated that the most helpful aspect is that the social worker is so responsive and accessible. “I email her, she emails me back.” The attorney reported that just that day she had received three emails from the social worker to give her updates on a client they were having trouble finding a placement for upon release.

Changes: The attorneys were each asked how things have changed in the way they assist their clients since the start of the program. Some of this discussion surrounded the issue of court miss-outs. Clients might miss going to court for many reasons; sometimes it is due to no fault of their own, but sometimes they simply refuse to go. Before the start of the PD-JMHL program, the attorneys would just have to wait for an extraction, or the forcible removal of an inmate from the jail cell, to occur. Extractions are not ideal because, according to one attorney, not only can they prejudice the judge against the defendant, but there is also the risk that someone will be hurt. She stated that she had some situations where clients picked up new charges because they hurt deputies during extractions.

Both of the attorneys agreed that the process of dealing with court miss-outs has changed since the beginning of the program. The attorneys now don’t just have to wait for an extraction, they can call the social worker and find out the reason for the miss-out. One of the attorneys stated that many times when they have the social worker follow up with the client, the client is generally in court the next day.

When asked if she thought there were fewer miss-outs because of the program, one attorney said that she didn’t know if there were fewer miss outs, but that they definitely resolved faster: “Now it’s rare that someone misses out for more than one day unless they are in the clinic.” She

also stated that she didn't think there were fewer extraction orders signed by judges, but she thought there were probably fewer extractions carried out. All of this leads to faster resolution of cases because the clients are getting to court faster and they are more likely to listen to advice if they have assistance at the jail. She noted, "if I can have someone at the jail who can talk to a client who is fragile . . . it just helps."

Success Stories: All interviewees were asked about what they thought a success story in this program looked like. They were all very clear that there is a wide range of successes that can take many forms with this vulnerable population, some of which are very small. Both attorneys stated that success can sometimes be as simple as when clients are able to get what they need. The supervising social worker stated that sometimes it feels as if they are not successful because some of the clients are so impaired it is impossible to make any headway with them. But in those cases, a successful outcome is considered the ability of the social worker to make the attorney aware of how severely mentally ill a client actually is, something that the attorney might otherwise not have known.

While everyone involved in the program has realistic expectations, there are clear successes, such as when clients go to court as scheduled, attain the services they need, and get linked with services on the outside to make reentry more successful. One of the attorneys stated, "We have a fair number of Regional Center clients who are developmentally disabled or have neurological disorders. . . For these clients, it's about getting them hooked up with Regional Center and getting them the services they need."

"The optimum success story is a client who has their needs met and is able to turn their lives around and get their lives back on track," stated one of the attorneys. She told the story of a client from Illinois to illustrate this type of success. While in jail this client was suicidal. He was calling his parents from the inside, which understandably worried them, so they called the attorney. The attorney was able to call the social worker and ask her to check up on the client. Not only was the social worker able to assess the client and report back to the attorney, but she was able to communicate with the parents and reassure them. They were able to come out to Los Angeles and get him released so he could go back home. The attorney stated that she heard recently from the parents that the client was on his medications and was working to get his life back in order.

The presence of the social worker in the jails makes the facilitation of these successes easier because she is able to communicate with everyone involved with the client. However, one of the attorneys also stated that even with the program, some of the clients do not have much hope for long-term success because of the severity of their mental illness. In some cases, he said the limits to success are the result of a society that does not emphasize or provide resources for treatment.

Suggestions for Improvement: Each of the interviewees was also asked about suggestions they had for improving the program and they all had the same answer: "we need more social workers." As reported above, because of the lack of resources, most of the county courts have not been notified about this program. To date, while some attorneys at the other courts have

been able to access the social worker from time to time, her services have really only been made available to the Airport and Lancaster courts.

One attorney stated, “I have a full appreciation of the value of a social work degree and perspective when it comes to helping my clients who are handicapped by their mental health problems.” This appreciation underscores the emphasis both attorneys placed on the need for more social workers. One of the attorneys simply said there was not enough time for the social worker to be able to do everything that needed to be done. The other attorney stated, “I try hard to ration using the social worker for when I feel she is my only option because there is only one of her. . . So, I try to limit my use of the social worker. If we had more social workers . . .”

Summary and Conclusions

The PD-JMHL program is an innovative, interagency program in Los Angeles County developed with the goal of helping Public Defender attorneys better serve their incarcerated, mentally ill clients. The introduction of a social worker into the jails is intended to help the attorneys more effectively address the client’s mental health needs, which in turn should reduce court miss-outs and ultimately move the client out of the criminal justice system and into community organizations that can better treat them.

The quantitative and qualitative data reported above suggest that the PD-JMHL program is a productive and effective program that helps the few Public Defender attorneys who have been able to utilize it and their clients. The quantitative data from the PD-JMHL database show that despite limited resources, the social worker helped 562 clients and had 3,724 interactions with concerned parties in just a two-year span. In this process, the social worker helped ensure the clients received needed services by actively working with DMH clinicians, community programs, and family members all while relaying this information back to the attorneys so they could better serve their clients. Using the data from the PD-JMHL database, Case Studies for two clients were also developed. These case studies clearly show how the collaboration between the attorney, the social worker, and other individuals can help lead to successful outcomes. Without the help of the social worker in the jails it is unlikely the attorney working from the outside would be able to accomplish this level of coordination of services for the client. At the very least, it is unlikely they would be able to do so as quickly.

While the data from the PD-JMHL database shows the amount of work and collaboration completed by the social worker, there are many questions left unanswered. These data, for example, cannot tell us how things have changed over time. They cannot tell us if there has been a reduction in court miss-outs or amount of time for resolution of cases because no pre-program data were available for these measures. However, as described above, they do answer questions about process. Qualitative data can, then, be used to answer more in-depth questions about how these processes and outcomes have changed since the beginning of the program. The qualitative data gathered from the interviews show that attorneys utilizing the PD-JMHL program believe that since the introduction of the social worker to the jails there have been significant

changes to the way they are able to serve their clients. Both attorneys stated the social worker in the jails filled an important gap for them, which they believe has resulted in fewer client extractions, clients more quickly receiving the services they need, and faster case resolutions.

The PD-JMHL program has gained recognition in Los Angeles County and has recently received accolades from the County. In October 2017, the LA County Public Defender's office won the Silver Eagle Award for the PD-JMHL program. At the awards ceremony, Los Angeles Board of Supervisors Chair Mark Ridley-Thomas stated that the PD-JMHL program had "demonstrated what effective collaboration among departments looks like." He stated, "You've set an example of what a public sector should strive to achieve" (LA County Public Defender, 2017).

The main challenge facing the PD-JMHL Program is the limited resources that only allow for one social worker. Continued success is contingent upon having enough resources to expand the program and be available to all attorneys in the Public Defender's office at all court locations. More social workers are needed to fully meet the needs of the mentally ill inmates in Los Angeles County jails. Further, at least one full-time person responsible for data collection and management is needed to ensure the PD-JMHL program is meeting its goals.

Chapter 9: IOW

Program Description

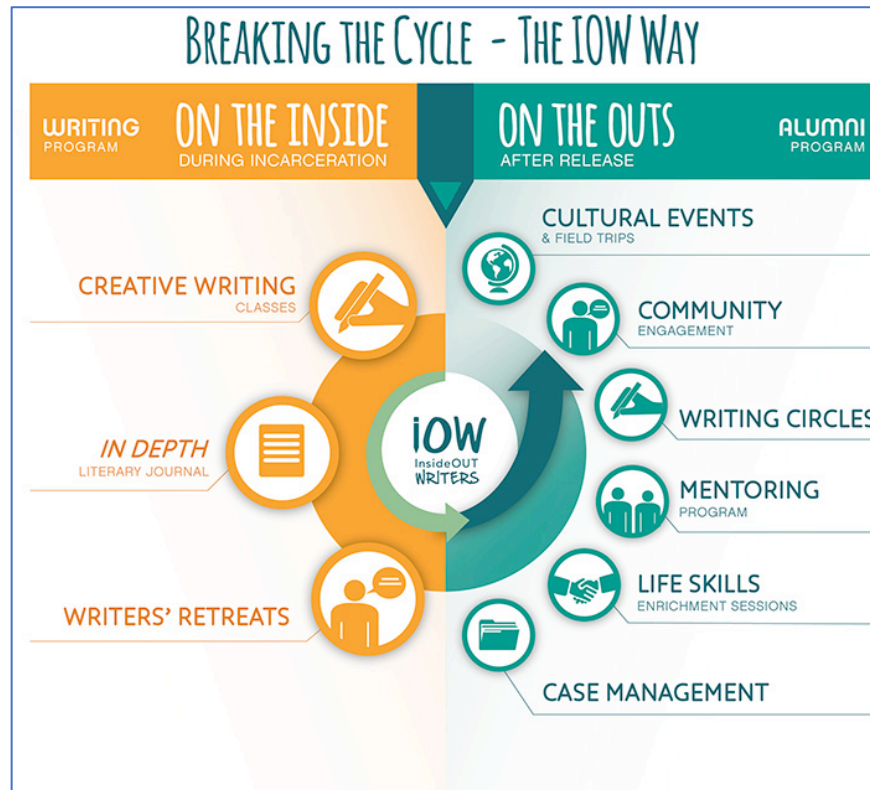
InsideOUT Writers (IOW) is a non-profit organization that offers two distinct programs working hand in hand. First, there is the writing program for youth currently incarcerated in all three Los Angeles County juvenile halls, which is now offered to adults in 5 California state prisons. Second, the IOW Alumni program, which was created in 2009, offers a continuum of care and support to former students once they are released from custody. The program is designed to support re-entry by offering an array of resources including case management services, life-skills workshops, creative writing circles, community engagement, and cultural field trips.

According to the IOW website, the mission of IOW is to “reduce the juvenile recidivism rate by providing a range of services that evolve to meet the needs of the currently and formerly incarcerated youth and young adults” (InsideOUT Writers, n.d.). IOW is the only program in Los Angeles County that provides services to juveniles while incarcerated and continues these services upon and *after release*.

InsideOUT Writers was founded in 1996 at Los Angeles County’s Central Juvenile Hall. The program was the vision of juvenile hall chaplain Sister Janet Harris, former *Los Angeles Times* journalist Duane Noriuki, and other writers who volunteered to teach writing classes to the incarcerated youth. “The founders’ sensitivity and respect for the power of the written word fostered an environment of trust and camaraderie whereby students’ creativity flourished in spite of the harsh conditions of detention” (InsideOUT Writers, n.d.).

Recognizing the need to continue to help IOW participants once they were released from custody, IOW developed the Alumni Program in 2009. The Alumni Program was designed to help formerly incarcerated youth make this transition by providing them with needed services, skills, and knowledge to allow them to re-enter as productive and self-sufficient members of society. More recently, in 2018, IOW received funding from Los Angeles County Probation, who will be referring 40 youth and their parents for services including prosocial activities, parenting workshops, and community engagement.

FIGURE 9.1: INSIDE OUT WRITERS PROGRAMS AND COMPONENTS



Source: insideoutwriters.org

Figure 9.1 illustrates all of the components of InsideOUT Writers. Since only the Alumni Program is currently being evaluated, only these components are described in more detail below.

- **Case Management** - The provision of case management is the cornerstone of the Alumni Program. Once a youth is released from custody, he/she works with a case manager to create an Individualized Action Plan (IAP), which outlines both short-term and long-term goals, and the steps necessary to reach these goals. However, the IAP is designed with each individual in mind, recognizing that every Alum will have disparate needs and circumstances. The case manager helps the Alumni obtain the resources they need, including housing (long-term and emergency), employment, education, important documents, legal assistance, transportation, counseling, and even items for the children of Alumni.
- **Writing Circles** - The Alumni Program also offers weekly 90-minute writing circles, each week facilitated by a different person. The writing circles are an essential part of the program, providing continuity from the writing program the youth were involved with while incarcerated. In these circles, Alumni come together to write and support each other.
- **Life Skills Workshops** - Alumni can also participate in a series of life skills workshops. These sessions build their capacity to effectively and positively address life's daily challenges and stressors that in the past may have led them to make unhealthy choices.

Workshops focus on developing critical thinking, work ethic, social, communication, and leadership skills.

- Community Engagement and Cultural Events - Alumni are exposed to new experiences and areas outside of their homes and communities through community engagement activities. Field trips and cultural and artistic events are not only educational, but also help Alumni bond as a support system because of these shared experiences.
- Mentoring Program – The Mentoring Program was designed to provide one on one mentoring to the Alumni, pairing them with adult role models based on their interests. For example, an Alum interested in the film industry and learning how films were made was paired with a professional screenwriter mentor. The mentor taught the Alum all about the business, even taking him on a film set to better learn about the process. However, the mentorship program is not currently active. While there was a waiting list of mentors who wanted to be involved, there were not enough youth coming into the program. With the new work order from Los Angeles County Probation to bring in the new youth and their parents, IOW is currently working to restart the mentoring program.

The current funding allowed the Alumni program to continue, as they had previously lost their only multi-year funding source. The funding helped the program hire a case manager with a Master of Social Work degree (MSW) (and then later a part-time junior case manager after the MSW resigned), purchase hardware for the office, and provide entertainment items such as video games and laptops for the young people to use when they are at IOW. According to the director, the changes that occurred because of this funding ultimately led to IOW realizing the founders' vision of the program, which is that it be run by those who have directly benefited from it. Currently the Director and the Junior Case Manager are both former students and Alumni of InsideOut Writers.

The overall goal of InsideOUT Writers Alumni Program is to provide services to IOW Alumni with the objective of helping them successfully reenter their communities. To that end, program goals include:

- Helping Alumni secure needed resources, including:
 - Emergency and long-term housing
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Access to identifying documentation, such as driver's licenses and social security cards
- Helping Alumni acknowledge trauma
- Helping Alumni progress in stages of cycle of change (discussed below)
- Increasing healthy behaviors

Methodology

The overarching research questions framing the current evaluation include:

- How many Alumni were served during the grant period?
- How many case management contacts were made?
- What referrals were made for Alumni?
- What services were provided?
- How many Alumni attended writing circles?
- What are the experiences of personnel and Alumni?
- How have Alumni progressed in the stages of the cycle of change?

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to answer these questions. A description of each of these data sources is described below. However, it is important to note that the methodology and measures used to evaluate InsideOUT Writers changed during the grant period. An evaluation plan was developed in conjunction with the MSW case manager at the beginning of the grant period. Prior to the evaluation process, there was no comprehensive data collected by IOW staff, so the evaluators created a spreadsheet database and a survey to be given to the young people in the program. However, early on in the process, the MSW recognized that the survey created for evaluation purposes was not working for IOW Alumni because many felt apprehensive about answering personal questions, so the survey was dropped from the data collection process. In addition, about halfway through the second year of the grant cycle this MSW realized that some of the data being collected on the Alumni was not satisfactory because it did not fully measure their progress, specifically with regard to discussing their trauma and making changes in their lives. As a result, IOW personnel and the researchers developed a new plan to measure progress in the cycle of change.

The cycle of change is part of a motivational interviewing approach that emphasizes motivation to change; it comes from the individual and is not imposed from external forces. The purpose of collecting this data was to measure the progress made by Alumni in both talking about their trauma and other issues and actually taking action to better their lives (Motivational Interviewing, n.d.). The stages in the cycle of change include:

- Pre-contemplation – A person in this stage either does not believe he/she have a problem or does not want to change.
- Contemplation – In this stage, the person starts to think about change and discusses the possibility of change with others.
- Determination – A person in this stage has made a decision to change. Here the person is preparing to take steps and believes he/she may actually be able to accomplish them. This is typically the planning stage.
- Action – A person actually changes by taking the actions they planned in the previous stage. According to this approach, support at this stage is very important.

- Maintenance – In this stage, the person maintains the new behavior. Changes lasting for six months or more are usually associated with increased quality of life.
- Lapse/Relapse – The person returns to previous unhealthy habits.

The intention of the MSW was to regularly record assessments of where Alumni were in this cycle of change to measure whether they were progressing or regressing. However, shortly after implementing this new plan and before she could begin entering data on progress in the cycle, the MSW resigned, making the measurement of these new variables on *past* Alumni impossible. Therefore, while it is recognized that progress in the cycle of change is the best measure of Alum success, these data are not available for most of the Alumni. Instead of attempting to give an overview of these measures, we have chosen to provide case studies (see description below) to highlight two Alumni who started with the new case manager. For these two young people, we can see what services were provided and how their participation in the program led to advancement in this cycle of change.

The following are the data sources and analyses being used in the current evaluation of IOW:

InsideOUT Writers Database: The researchers created a spreadsheet database for IOW personnel to keep track of case management contacts with Alumni. The database now includes the type of contact, type of referrals, whether service was provided, types of activities Alum took part in, whether the Alum has made progress in the cycle of change, and extensive narratives about the contact. The database was completed in September 2015, but some earlier contacts were entered after this date.

Case Studies: The data in the IOW database were also used to tell the stories of two Alumni who had successful outcomes. These case studies are used to take a closer look at individuals and what their experiences have been with the program over time to try to identify those factors that appear to be related to their successful outcomes.

Interviews with IOW Personnel: An interview was conducted with the junior case manager and Director of IOW. They provided an overview of the program, its goals, and what they perceive to be its most important features. These interviewees are unique in that they were able to provide insight both as key personnel within the program, but also as former students and Alumni of IOW. The qualitative analysis will include both of these perspectives.

Results

InsideOUT Writers Database

Between April 2015 and December 2017, 652 separate recorded contacts with 87 Alumni were made. The age range of Alumni is 16 to 24 years old. The average number of contacts made with each Alum was 7.4 and ranged from 1 to 86. These contacts were varied and included simple check-ins with Alumni, providing referrals to Alumni, and attending writing circles and Life Skills

Workshops. These numbers emphasize just how productive the case managers have been, but don't tell the entire story as more informal interactions between the case managers and the youth are not always entered into the database. The following tables provide data about these Alum contacts with InsideOUT Writers.

Figure 9.2 shows the number of recorded interactions or contacts with Alumni by month between September 2015 and December 2017. While there were contacts before the database was finished in September 2015, very few of these were recorded. This figure shows great variation over this time span. It was clear that it took several months for the MSW to both have frequent interactions with Alumni *and* begin recording these interactions in the database. The frequency of reporting increased steadily until the end of 2016, showing that the MSW was actively working with the Alumni and recording the interactions. However, by February and March 2017 there was a sharp decline in recorded interactions with Alumni. This coincides with the resignation of the MSW. During this time period, while Alumni were coming into IOW, the recording of these contacts in the database was not occurring consistently. As the junior case manager was hired and began working with Alumni in March 2017, the number of recorded interactions began to increase. However, because the junior case manager is only a part-time employee, it is clear she is unable to spend as much time with Alumni and entering data as the full-time MSW was able to do.

FIGURE 9.2: NUMBER OF RECORDED INTERACTIONS WITH ALUMNI BY MONTH

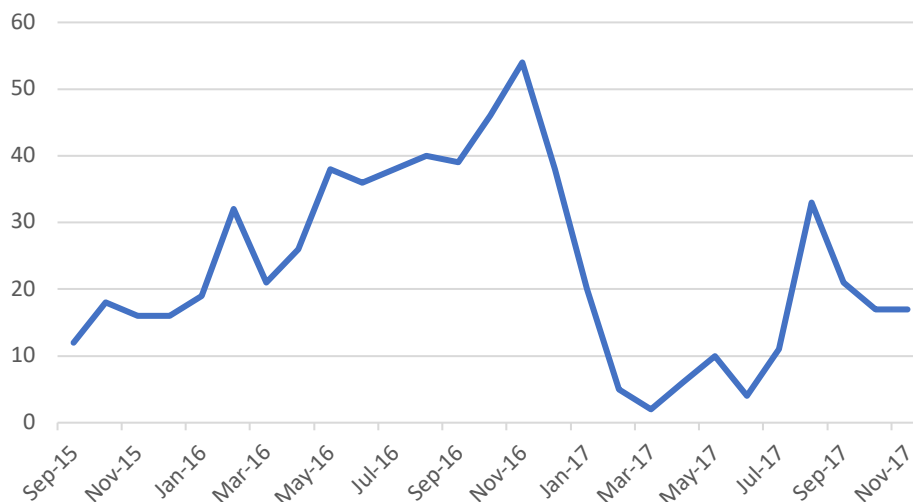


Table 9.1 shows that nearly half of all IOW contacts with Alumni are for intake and check-ins and for psychological counseling or treatment. Some of the counseling needs are referred to outside sources, but some were provided by the MSW working at IOW. The data also show that Alumni are receiving the assistance they need to help them more successfully reenter their communities. For example, IOW personnel help the Alumni secure housing, apply for jobs, enroll in school, obtain needed documents such as social security cards and drivers licenses, obtain legal assistance, and even help provide healthy food and baby items when needed. Of the referrals made to Alumni, 467 services were provided, 24 Alumni did not show up, one client was

waitlisted and 74 services were pending at the time of data collection. These data show that when referrals are made to the Alumni, the majority of services are actually being provided. The case management services provided by IOW are important steps in keeping these Alumni from recidivating.

TABLE 9.1: CONTACTS, REFERRALS AND ACTIVITIES

Type	Number
Contacts, Referrals and Activities	
Intake, Follow-up Communications and Check-Ins	152
Referrals*	
Counseling and Treatment	168
Parenting	64
Transportation	43
Housing	40
Employment	31
Document help	24
Education	20
Health/Food	8
Legal	5
Activities*	
Life Skills Workshop	6
Writing Circle	58
Other and Unspecified	107
Total**	726

*Very few of the attendees at Life Skills Workshops and Writing Circles are recorded in the database; more complete data for these two activities are included in tables below.

**The total is greater than the 652 contacts because Alumni sometimes participated in several activities or services in a single visit.

The signature activity of IOW is the writing circle. The Alumni Program holds writing circles every Thursday except when they have off-site events or holiday parties. Table 9.2 shows the number of writing circles and number of participants for 2015 – 2017. During these three years, 722 participants attended the 138 writing circles. Each writing circle is led by a different person and has a different topic of discussion. For example, in 2017, the writing circles discussed the following topics: violence in our communities, current affairs (Black Lives Matter, Policies, Criminal Justice Reform), personal branding, personal growth, community changes, letter writing to incarcerated youth, and connections. The writing circles provide Alumni opportunities to write about and discuss these topics and support provide support to one another.

TABLE 9.2: WRITING CIRCLE PARTICIPATION

Year	Number of Writing Circles	Number of Participants
2015	46	250
2016	46	235
2017	46	237

Life-Skills Workshops

Life-Skills Workshops are held periodically as part of the Alumni Program. While exact numbers are not available for these workshops, IOW staff reported they are generally attended by 5 to 15 Alumni. In 2016 and 2017, the workshops covered a range of topics, including:

- Addiction
- Personal Branding Workshop
- Resume Building
- Screenwriting Workshop
- Eating Healthy and Budgeting

Case Studies

The IOW database was also used to tell the story of two Alumni. These case studies are helpful because they describe the services provided by the IOW case manager and the processes these young people go through while utilizing the services IOW provides. These individuals are more recent Alumni, therefore there is more complete data pertaining to their cases. Not only can we see what services were provided to them, but we can also see the assessment of their movement through the cycle of change.

Alum #1: Alum #1 enrolled at IOW in May 2017. At the time of her intake, she had a child who was almost one year old. She stated that she needed help with baby supplies, but that she hadn't thought about any of her other needs at that point. The case manager recorded that this Alum was in the Pre-contemplation stage at this point because she was not ready to talk about making any changes to her life. A couple of weeks later, however, when the case manager dropped off baby supplies to her, they spoke about the possibility of enrolling in school. Alum #1 stated she was open to retrieving transcripts and looking into enrolling. In July 2017, the case manager reached out to this Alum and invited her to a field trip. The Alum attended a Dodger game with IOW a week later. After the game, the Alum followed up with IOW expressing an interest in attending writing circles.

In August 2017, the case manager followed up with the Alum to get her to sign a release form so that her transcripts could be retrieved and to give her housing applications. A few days later the case manager provided transportation so the Alum could attend a writing circle. After the writing circle, the Alum was assessed to be at the Contemplation stage in the cycle of change. The case manager wrote, "this is the first time she has acknowledged the need for change and first time

attending a writing circle outside of juvenile hall. She didn't read but paid attention and showed heartfelt reactions.” According to the case manager, this showed a change in her behavior and the way she talked about her past and future.

The very next day, the Alum asked about Narcotics Anonymous classes and was referred to Homeboy Industries and local churches. Because she made the effort to reach out to the case manager herself, rather than waiting to be contacted, she was moved to the Determination stage. The following month, she was provided transportation so she could enroll in school and she completed the enrollment process. A month later, she started school. In addition, she started receiving more services from Homeboy Industries. The case manager determined she had moved into the Action stage because she was taking positive steps to improve her life. In December, she also enrolled in California Crossroads for more job opportunities.

Along the way, this Alum had problems with housing. For example, in November she lost her housing because she got into an argument with the owner of the house. While this was certainly a setback for the Alum as housing is crucial to further development, the steady progress of this individual was evident. During these few months, with the help of IOW, she realized the need for change, started taking steps necessary for change to occur, and eventually actually made the changes that would help her make a better life for herself. The proactive steps that the IOW case manager took with this Alum clearly had an impact on her progress. If the case manager had not reached out and invited the Alum to a field trip or made follow up visits to her, her progression in the cycle of change may not have been so extreme.

Alum #2: Alum #2 first came to IOW in May 2017 after being referred by an IOW teacher. At the time she enrolled she was living with her boyfriend and his family and was pregnant with twin boys. She told the case manager she did not intend to move forward with her action plan until after the boys were born. At this point, Alum #2 was assessed to be in the Pre-Contemplation stage as she was not willing to start talking about any of her needs or issues at that time.

In July 2017, Alum #2 gave birth to her boys. The case manager stopped by the hospital to check in on her and the babies, who were healthy. Two days later, the case manager provided Alum #2 and her babies transportation home. Over the next couple of months, Alum had to work with the Department of Public Social Services, had to go to court to deal with a ticket and had to rush one of her babies to the hospital. The case manager helped provide transportation and support for each of these events. In August 2017, the Alum re-enrolled in the foster youth system so she could receive benefits given to former foster youth. In the meeting with a peer advisor, the Alum spoke for herself instead of looking for guidance and spoke about future plans. The case manager assessed her to be in the Action stage as she took the steps necessary to receive benefits. In September, Alum #2 got approved for the Supervised Independent Living Placement Program, indicating she was ready to live independently. With the help of the case manager, Alum #2 continued to progress. In November, she began talking about the abuse she had endured in her past and admitted she did not know how to move forward. The case manager recommended counseling and got her in touch with the director of a counseling program, setting up a date to meet. Later that month, her benefits were approved by the court and she got a new job. In

December, the case manager stopped by to drop off baby supplies. The Alum told her that therapy was helping and she planned to enroll in school for the spring or summer semester.

The case manager provided consistent support for this Alum, making her reentry more successful. The Alum clearly made progress in the cycle of change and has begun making more healthy decisions as a result of the support and guidance IOW provided.

Interviews

A group interview was conducted with the Director and Junior Case Manager of IOW, both of whom were former students and Alumni of the program. Because of their dual roles, they were able to provide insight as students, Alumni and administrators of the IOW program.

Program Overview and Important Features: The director stated that IOW is unique in that it offers a writing program for youth currently incarcerated and an Alumni program that continues to support the youth once they are released. He says the goal of the Alumni program is keeping the participants involved in creative writing and peer supported mentorship with one another. On a personal level, he says, IOW “was created out of genuine empathy and concern and love that many volunteers had during our very first classes in 1996.” These classes were designed to “provide a therapeutic outlet for young people to be able to vent their frustrations or other emotions in a way outside the norm in that hostile environment.” He went on to say that IOW transforms and even saves lives, explaining how the program helped alleviate the hopelessness he felt when he was incarcerated. “It was because of the profoundly impactful lessons I learned from my writing program teacher that I remembered to be truthful to myself and remain hopeful for a future. It was during moments of despair that I didn’t know what else to do but write about it. . . If this had not been taught to me, who knows where I would be or if I would still even be here.” These exact same sentiments are made by the youth currently in the Alumni program. They talk about engaging in introspection through writing and begin to form some understanding of their lives and the crimes they committed, which put them in jail in the first place. “Ultimately we want our young people to be able to address the trauma they have experienced.” IOW is designed to “help them battle whatever personal demons they have.” The goal is to “provide holistic services but be mindful of what our young people have gone through and help them move past it.”

The case manager described IOW as a family-based organization in the sense that, in both the writing program and the Alumni program, the youth are able to find similarities with others in the circles and form important bonds with them, which is very impactful for those who are or have been incarcerated. She stated that writing is a skill you learn and carry with you even when you are released. She says, “it is a release. A coping skill.” The Alumni program provides resources and opens up doors for the youth. IOW is sometimes the jumpstart they need, helping them “grow on the inside and then provide the resources to continue to grow on the outside.”

When asked about the most important feature of the Alumni program, both the director and case manager had similar responses. They both said the sense of family and the support that

goes with that is the most important part of IOW. The case manager referred to her own experiences after being released. She said, “there was so much noise. I wanted to go back in. My family told me I was crazy.” But when the current director picked her up and told her it was normal, she said, “I cried. I thought I was crazy. I built very close relationships when I was incarcerated and then that was gone. I felt like I lost that sense of family.” When she started with the Alumni program, she realized it was her home too.

As a case manager, she also realizes it is the support that brings the youth in and helps them most. What is most important is “meeting alumni exactly where they are, and not holding them to any conditions.” In referring to the youth, she states, “we are going to be your foundation and uplift you and continue to push you. . . A lot of our youth don’t have family. This is it for them. Come here, eat, watch TV, play video games. . .Knowing they can come whenever. Alums come back years later and know they are welcome any time. Having that constant support is everything.”

The director had similar things to say about the importance of the family support they give the youth. “We understand everyone has to undergo their own journeys with the different stages of development. They may still be involved with drugs or gangs and while we don’t condone that, we want them to feel safe enough to be honest with us. . .We let our young people know they are valued.” He goes on to say that many of the youth have never been told anyone is proud of them, even for little things. When someone finally gives them words of encouragement or a hug, it means everything to them. “It can change someone’s life.”

Writing Circles: The case manager stated that while she was inside the teachers created a safe space for her and made her “feel so un-alone.” She felt the commitment of the teachers was amazing, and that she knew she could depend on them. “They teach us and provide that safety net to let us be ourselves and figure out who we are. Writing connects so many pieces together for you. . . It’s so impactful.” She further stated that when she was released and became part of the Alumni program, the safety net continued; participants “don’t want to hold onto the burdens and pain anymore. . .they get feedback [on their writing] and everybody gets to make comments. Comments are encouraging and helps sew up the scars a little bit.” She finishes by saying “I am so grateful that so many get to experience these teachers, they get to feel safe. I’ve never felt that safe before. Now I get to work in a safe space and provide a safe space for others. The writing circles do that for people.”

The Director further discussed the importance of the writing circles. He started by discussing the role of the writing classes in juvenile hall, but then stated that the staple of the Alumni Program is the writing circle.

“Every Thursday like clockwork all of our young people. . .come together to share what their current hardships or obstacles are. They don’t always have someone to speak with. When they come here they know everyone in the room knows exactly what they are talking about. People don’t often understand why people return to incarceration at such an alarming rate. It’s because they’re easily discouraged. It’s

because they feel hopeless. They don't know what they are supposed to do. They give up. . . But, here they are able to confide with others going through the same thing. There is a safety net. If they are tempted to do something wrong, they have someone to reach out to who understands. This is why the writing circles are so important."

The writing circles are clearly a crucial part of the reentry process, providing very necessary support to the Alumni.

Success: According to the junior case manager, success comes in many forms. She says that for some of the young people it is not about accomplishing everything, but it is about "making steps toward your own recovery, from your own trauma." It's about "doing exactly what makes you happy, what fulfills you as a person." These young people are successful when they are not going back to their old habits but are figuring out new ways of living. "Everyone has their own success story. It doesn't have to be extravagant. It is going above your own standards, exceeding those standards." It is a success, she says, when the young people move forward and realize they are accomplishing something they didn't think they were capable of. Similarly, the director stated that a success occurs when "our young people are finally able to start believing in themselves."

Suggestions for Improvement: Both the director and case manager argued that more funding was necessary so they could better serve the Alumni. The director stated that they needed at least one full time case manager. The one part-time case manager they have now is not enough to help all of the Alumni and she will be spread even more thin with the probation youth that will start coming in. More funding would also allow them to take the young people on more field trips and community engagements, helping to improve their social competence and cultural awareness while also having fun. Increasing these events would enable the staff to use them as an incentive for young people to more consistently come into the office. "Our retention rate is not as successful as we want because [Alumni] are going back into their communities that provide temptations to young people. We have to think of ways to make what we offer more appealing to them." Additional funding is critical to improving retention.

Summary and Conclusions

The InsideOUT Writers Alumni Program supports re-entry of formerly incarcerated youth by offering an array of resources including case management services, life-skills workshops, creative writing circles, community engagement, and cultural field trips. Between September 2015 and December 2017, InsideOUT Writers recorded 652 contacts and interactions with 87 Alumni. During these interactions, a wide variety of services were provided. These services included simple follow-ups or transportation and sometimes they included referrals for psychological counseling. Additionally, Alumni were provided assistance with housing, employment, educational, and legal issues. In addition to the case management services provided, between 2015 and 2017, IOW Alumni also participated in 138 writing circles with 722 participating Alumni. These writing circles provide participants the opportunity to write about and discuss a range of

topics and provide support to one another. Alumni also participated in a variety of life-skills workshops and field trips and community events.

Two case studies provided more personal evidence of the level of dedication of the case managers. Not only does the case manager provide needed services, but she clearly goes out of her way to follow up with and check on Alumni even when they are not coming to the IOW office. The case studies demonstrate how the support and services provided can lead to successful reentry and progress in the cycle of change.

Finally, the qualitative data further show how impactful the support and family-like atmosphere can be for the Alumni. The very fact that the Director and the Junior Case Manager are former students and Alumni is evidence of the success of this program. In their interview, they explain how their lives were changed by IOW and the ways in which they can see this same transformation occurring with current participants.

Overall, the data show IOW to be a very effective program. However, in order to have continued success, many issues need to be addressed. First, the data show that there was a decrease in recorded contacts in February and March of 2017 when the MSW resigned. While the numbers began to increase when the Junior Case Manager was hired, these numbers are still well below the peak from when a full-time MSW was employed. This clearly shows that one part-time case manager is not enough to handle the number of Alumni seeking services or enough to enter data on the services provided. This problem will only be exacerbated when the Probation work order begins and new young people are brought into the program. Not only is a minimum of one full-time case manager a necessity, someone dedicated to entering data is also recommended. More comprehensive data collection will not only help with tracking of Alumni, but will also make evaluation of the program more effective. Finally, it was reported that IOW has a relatively low rate of retention of Alumni, which can lead to lower rates of success. In order to overcome each of these challenges, more resources are necessary.

Chapter 10: Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Ambitious in scope, the Drug Enforcement, Education and Prevention Project (DEEP) represents efforts that seek to not only address drug trafficking and serious crime in Los Angeles County, but also to meet the needs of multiple vulnerable populations. These seemingly disparate efforts fall along a spectrum of concerns for the county that ultimately share the common mission of securing the health and safety of residents. These endeavors are further united in the dedication and perseverance of the practitioners who work to meet these objectives. A recurring theme that was quite evident in our interviews was the strongly held belief that their work is critical to making a difference and improving the life conditions for the communities of Los Angeles County. This commitment is all the more commendable given how labor intensive these undertakings truly are, not only requiring long hours and working with limited resources, but typically being completed with little public recognition for the importance of their contributions.

This evaluation used a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data regarding how these initiatives function, the outcomes of their operations, and contextual factors that provide insight into the challenges that each face. Across the board, we found a wealth of evidence that these programs and services are consistently and highly productive within the parameters of the resources that are available to them at any given time. Investigative efforts against mid- to high-level drug trafficking organizations have paid off handsomely in terms of seizing massive amounts of illegal narcotics intended for distribution in the county. Supporting programs effectively secure wiretaps for investigations and abate nuisance properties, while heightening officer security and efficiency through deconfliction and analytical services. Programs also provide services that successfully mitigate risk of unhealthy behaviors and manage the care of populations affected by drugs, crime and mental illness. Collectively, DEEP is positioned to address a constellation of pressing issues that continue to plague Los Angeles County and effect real change.

Major Findings

The findings here illustrate that a confluence of factors contribute to the success of these programs. Below we discuss those findings that are key for understanding the nature of their accomplishments and the contexts in which they occur.

L.A. IMPACT: The taskforce has been invaluable to the efforts against the manufacturing, importation, and distribution of illegal narcotics in Los Angeles County. Between 2013 and 2017, L.A. IMPACT was responsible for dismantling nearly 300 clandestine drug labs and seizing over 100,000 pounds of drugs, effectively preventing over one and a half billion doses of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine from reaching communities. While still seizing a sizeable amount of drugs in 2017, there was a steep decline in the numbers, most notably for marijuana. This decrease is best understood in the context of having to redistribute resources and alter taskforce focus to accommodate funding cuts and the legalization of recreational

marijuana in California. While increasing seizures indicate fentanyl is finding its way to Los Angeles County, methamphetamine remains a larger concern. Ultimately, the taskforce's strength lies in the diverse expertise brought by officers from primarily local agencies. This is particularly true when the area of expertise is one not normally supplied through personnel assigned to L.A. IMPACT, such as financial crime which is critical for undoing the money laundering organizations sustaining criminal operations. But its weakness is that this reliance is seriously undercut when budgetary and personnel restraints within these partner agencies result in the loss of officers available to the taskforce.

Cal-MMET: In its capacity as the “boots on the ground” for the investigative efforts of a wide range of law enforcement operations targeting the trafficking of methamphetamine in the county, Cal-MMET has shown a consistently high level of productivity. Between 2013 and 2017, the team seized over 6,000 pounds of illicit drugs and secured the arrest of over 400 individuals connected to drug trafficking operations. This work equated to preventing the distribution of over 100 million doses of cocaine, heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine within Los Angeles County. Because other law enforcement teams might ultimately make seizures and/or arrests on the basis of work that Cal-MMET has undertaken, their own statistics do not demonstrate the full breadth of their contributions. Nor do mere numbers speak to the important role the team plays in enhancing law enforcement effectiveness in and out of the county through the sharing of its expertise on the operations of drug trafficking organizations. The intensive nature of the long-term investigations Cal-MMET engages in is compounded by the team's small size and the great demand that exists for their assistance. Having the necessary resources, such as additional personnel and air support, will be critical to meet the future demands that will surely be placed on the team if drug trafficking organizations increasingly turn their sights to fentanyl and became more financially secure using legal marijuana dispensaries for money laundering.

LA CLEAR: The services of LA CLEAR offer vital investigative support for law enforcement operations in Southern California. Well over a million inquiries were made to its case/subject database between 2013 and 2017, resulting in approximately half a million instances in which agencies were possibly engaged in overlapping investigations or had intelligence that could be shared. The Watch Center posted and tracked over 300,000 critical events and gave over 27,000 notices of possible conflicts between operations. There is simply no way to measure the extent to which law enforcement agencies benefited from these deconfliction services, but it cannot be doubted that LA CLEAR allows agencies to conserve limited resources by preventing the duplication of investigative efforts and augmenting officer safety by averting possible conflicts between field operations. Besides providing much needed support on electronic surveillance cases, analytical support further helps make the most efficient use of investigators' time and can strengthen cases by providing more in-depth analysis of complex data that is produced as a result of investigations, such as cell phone tower data, and which local agencies may lack the wherewithal to understand. The analysts working in the Watch Center and the Analytical Unit are extremely productive, but steadily decreasing funding has made keeping a sufficient number of analysts a challenge.

CHESS: As a legally mandated part of the wiretap process, CHESS has been a consistently successful component; there were just over 350 wiretap orders sought by CHESS between 2013 and 2017, with 95% of orders actually being obtained. The primary reason orders were not secured was withdrawal of wiretap applications when the suspect had switched phones and a new application was required. While prosecution rates were measured, they proved a poor fit for measuring the productivity of CHESS. Wiretaps are only obtained as part of investigations involving at least mid-level drug trafficking organizations or rather serious offenses, efforts which may last months or even years before culminating in criminal charges. The exceptional success rate for securing orders is due to the expertise and dedication of the Deputy District Attorneys and their supervisors, as well as the training CHESS provides law enforcement personnel as to California's highly restrictive wiretap statute and stringent legal criteria to be met to secure wiretap orders. A rigorous, time consuming review and preparation process must be undertaken for each wiretap application. Only two attorneys handle all applications as a result of cuts to funding, and the number of applications has only increased in recent years. This makes their success rate for obtaining wiretap orders even more remarkable when it is considered they also have numerous other duties to contend with, such as ensuring wiretap orders receive necessary extensions and evidence derived from wiretaps is admissible in court.

TOUGH: With 40 nuisance property abatement procedures initiated and only three properties not considered abated between July 2015 and December 2017, TOUGH has shown itself to be effective within broader law enforcement efforts to address drug trafficking and other criminal operations within the City of Los Angeles. Rarely requiring formal injunctions to meet the objectives of reducing gang and illegal narcotic activities at certain locations, the chief methods for achieving compliance are case conferences with property owners and seeking the eviction of problematic tenants. The TOUGH attorney can require owners to engage in a range of remedies for addressing the nuisance problems at their property, including physical improvements to the property, changes to management practices, and even having the property sold. As the almost perfect success rate indicates, these remedies have proved to be highly successful. While the potential for displacement of problems is very real, the nature of property abatement supports an outlook of moving onto the next property as needed. That the TOUGH attorney is not dedicated solely to L.A. IMPACT-identified properties and only has jurisdiction within the City of Los Angeles are limitations that will need to be addressed.

SYF: The Sheriff's Youth Foundation serves thousands of at-risk youth a year in their 17 Youth Academies. The focus of these Academies is academics, but a variety of other programming is also provided. In 2015 and 2016, 1,533 youth participated in sports at the various Academies, including soccer, baseball, boxing, and tennis. Summer months are particularly busy, with 1,850 youth participating during the summer of 2017. In addition to regular summer programming, Camp COURAGE, run by the Industry YAL, attracted 60 young people in 2016 and 90 in 2017, while Life After High School had 35 youth participate in 2017. In late 2016, SYF put on the Anti-Drug Pilot Program in several of the Academies. Surveys were completed by the youth participating in the program; results showed that most youth felt drugs and alcohol were difficult to obtain, had no family or friends who used illegal drugs and felt they could have an impact on their communities and schools. However, the data also suggested that when someone has a

family member who uses illegal drugs, they are also more likely to have friends using drugs. In addition, the data indicate that youth who have people in their lives who use illegal drugs are less likely to believe they are empowered to effect change in their environments. Overall, these findings indicate how important SYF is in Los Angeles County. The program effectively gets thousands of kids off the streets, offers them healthy and safe activities, and provides them with positive role models, which in turn should affect the choices they make and how impactful they feel in their communities and schools.

PD-JMHL: The PD-JMHL program was designed to help Deputy Public Defenders more efficiently represent their mentally ill clients by placing a social worker into the county jails to serve as a liaison, with the goal of moving them out of custody and into treatment in the community as quickly as possible. Between 2016 and 2017, a total of 562 clients were referred to the PD-JMHL program, over 70% coming from just two courts. The social worker, acting as a liaison between client and attorney, had 3,724 interactions made on behalf of the program's clients. During this time, 56 clients were released from jail and linked with community programs to receive mental health and/or substance abuse treatment. The Deputy Public Defenders interviewed perceived that the program has been successful in producing court miss-outs that rarely last longer than a day and fewer extractions actually being carried out, both of which have resulted in the shorter resolution time of cases. Providing the most efficient legal representation to the mentally ill clients detained in county jails is critical not only for alleviating the problem of jail overcrowding, but also for ensuring these clients are receiving the most appropriate treatment outside of county correctional facilities, so they can more successfully reenter society.

IOW: InsideOUT Writers provides support and case management services to formerly incarcerated youth. Between April 2015 and December 2017, case managers made 652 recorded contacts with 87 Alumni. The types of interactions varied, with the most frequent being follow-up communications, check-ins, and counselling. As the signature activity of IOW, there were 138 writing circles with 722 participants during this time period. The dedication of IOW staff is demonstrated by the large number of services they are able to provide, despite the limited resources available to them. However, the decrease in numbers over the course of the grant period is evidence of the need for at least one full-time case manager. Case studies further show the ways in which proactive case management can keep Alumni involved in the program, talking about and addressing their trauma, and making progress toward more healthy lifestyles. Further, qualitative data from interviews demonstrate the importance of IOW in the lives of these young people. As former Alumni, the junior case manager and director both believe the most important feature of the program is the support and family atmosphere provided. While incarcerated this support had been provided by IOW writing classes, and upon release the Alumni program, already familiar to these young people, can offer continuity and give them a safe place turn. The data suggest that IOW effectively helps many young people find the support and services they need to successfully reenter their communities.

Challenges

Two themes emerged as to the challenges that each of the eight initiatives face: funding and the need for greater infrastructure as it pertains to data collection.

Funding: Common to all of the grantees was the reality that lack of sufficient funding has placed an undue burden on personnel and their operations in meeting the demands of their individual missions. With steadily decreasing funding or funding that simply did not prove to be adequate for allowing initiatives to truly achieve program goals, productivity was decreased or was maintained at the great cost of heavy workloads and lessened efficiency. Certainly a need for more personnel was the primary problem that beset these operations, relating to issues that touched on data collection and input, fewer clients being served or served in a less timely manner, and a decreased amount of illegal narcotics being prevented from reaching the streets. Finding new sources of revenue is crucial if programs and services are to be sustainable in the long run and reach their full operational potential. The services they provide communities are essential, as evidenced by the many issues still plaguing Los Angeles County. Drug trafficking organizations and substance abuse are rife, and while it is impossible to predict the future trajectory that crime rates will take for the county, it seems certain that the demand for services addressing the needs of at-risk populations shows no signs of declining.

Data Infrastructure: The data needs for this evaluation were many and varied, requiring evaluators to design data collection tools in some cases, and allowing for the observation of existing data systems and their limitations in others. Common to most initiatives, the lack of sufficient personnel extended to not having a position dedicated to the input, management, and retrieval of operational data. Using personnel whose official responsibilities do not include data processing not only makes the management of data less efficient, but also limits the attention they can devote to their primary duties. Indeed, that some data was not necessarily accessible to the evaluators in a timely manner speaks to this very problem. It must be appreciated that prior to this evaluation, some initiatives have only employed statistical data for the purpose of internally tracking their own performance. It is important for these programs to consider the broader implications of the data they collect and how it might be best employed to inform the future. Ultimately, data are vital for formal performance assessments to ensure that program goals are actually being met. When funding is contingent upon showing such effectiveness and utilization of best practices, the importance of a strong data infrastructure cannot be overstated.

Recommendations and Funding Needs

L.A. IMPACT: There are two main avenues that the taskforce would do well to pursue not only in order to maximize the efficiency of its drug interdiction efforts, but to ensure that the necessary funding it is currently lacking can be secured. This includes:

- Expanding the taskforce's areas of expertise
- Increasing public profile and utilization of data

Two key areas appear to be underserved with L.A. IMPACT: the ability to target money laundering operations and to stay abreast of technological advances. Both of these capabilities are vitally important if the taskforce is to continue to advance its efforts. As previously noted, the seizure of drugs is only half the battle in undoing mid- to high-level drug trafficking organizations; money laundering is crucial to their operations and must also be targeted if these organizations are to be truly dismantled. Further, the increasing technological sophistication of these organizations also outstrips that of law enforcement and allows for more opportunities to evade detection or have communications intercepted. If L.A. IMPACT were to acquire personnel who have the expertise to understand and address these areas, their ability to engage in more effective enforcement efforts where drug trafficking organizations are concerned would be enhanced.

Adding new personnel is obviously contingent upon securing more funding. In the pursuit of new revenue sources, L.A. IMPACT should consider two tactics that will serve the taskforce well in this regard. The first is to devise new ways to heighten its public profile. The general public is largely unaware of L.A. IMPACT or the work that it does, as are many potential funders and donors. While L.A. IMPACT has a promotional video on YouTube, it should consider other uses of social media that can further promote its accomplishments, as well as outreach in the form of partnering with schools and other community organizations to engage in raising awareness of drug abuse. Data are also key and being able to demonstrate the effectiveness of L.A. IMPACT's operations will attract new funders. L.A. IMPACT should invest in building a data infrastructure that will allow for easier access to data, but also look to providing more nuanced data outside of overall figures (e.g. drug seizures, labs dismantled) that mask the many smaller accomplishments that are required to achieve the larger outcomes of seizures and arrests.

Cal-MMET: As with the other initiatives here, the greatest challenge that Cal-MMET faces is funding-related in that its services are in great demand, but it has a team of just 10 investigators and lacks any officers from local agencies. More funding is certainly the key to meeting the team's need for additional personnel. In the quest to secure more funding, we recommend that Cal-MMET consider:

- Raising public awareness of Cal-MMET operations
- Seeking to track arrests and seizures made by other teams

In a sense, Cal-MMET is competing with L.A. IMPACT for partner agencies in Los Angeles County and experiencing the same problems of officer attrition because agencies cannot spare personnel

long-term. The team would be well-served to promote their accomplishments to generate interest from potential funders and partner agencies. Cal-MMET does not seek acknowledgement for its work; there is the understanding within the law enforcement community of the superior services the team can provide that keep it in constant demand. But to secure more personnel and necessary resources, such as air support, looking outward beyond the boundaries of law enforcement will be important. Another potential area for increasing awareness of the true nature of the team's accomplishments concerns exploring the feasibility of collecting data regarding arrests, seizures, and other actions that are undertaken by other agencies as a result of Cal-MMET's investigative work. The team's statistics are impressive by themselves, but to show the full breadth of their effectiveness requires seeking the outcomes achieved by other agencies and teams that would not have occurred without their involvement.

LA CLEAR: The ever-decreasing funding for LA CLEAR threatens to compromise the quality of the support services they provide law enforcement agencies in Southern California. There are two needs that are most pressing and for which receiving sufficient funding will always be a concern. These include:

- Maintaining an adequate number of analysts to meet demands for service
- Providing opportunities for educational and technological growth

The need for increased funding in order to hire more analysts is imperative if the Watch Center and Analytical Unit are to maintain the quality of their service in responding to case/subject inquiries, tracking critical events, and providing analytical support to investigations. These services are irreplaceable within the law enforcement community, freeing up an untold number of resources and time for agencies and contributing to officer safety. If these services were to be in any way compromised because of insufficient personnel, it is law enforcement and the communities of Southern California who have everything to lose. That LA CLEAR is an essential resource to the area also comes in part because of its currency in the field and the technology they employ. Opportunities must always be provided that will allow analysts and technicians to receive education and training on trends, techniques, and technology that will allow them to remain the "go to" resource they are at present time for law enforcement agencies and taskforces in the area.

CHESS: The work of the CHESS Deputy District Attorneys is highly labor intensive and the demand for wiretaps appears to be growing, making sufficient funding all that much more important for CHESS to maintain its high standards while meeting that demand. The two greatest needs that CHESS requires additional funding for are:

- An additional Deputy District Attorney to be assigned to CHESS
- Hiring of a full-time Wiretap Coordinator

Not only is funding for the CHESS attorneys only at 26%, there has been a loss of a third attorney assigned to the unit because of funding cuts. If targeting drug trafficking and other criminal organizations in Los Angeles is a true priority, then the very essential role of CHESS in those efforts

must be recognized and protected from being diminished by a lack of personnel. Furthermore, there are many tasks the attorneys simply do not have time for and ultimately fall to an already overburdened administrative staff, such as preparing complaints. But there is also the fact that the CHES database requires updating and maintaining in order to be able to effectively track and assess performance of the unit. The use of wiretaps will remain a key investigative technique that can and often does provide evidence that is key to filing charges and securing convictions of the members of large scale crime organizations. In this regard, it is vital that the demands placed on CHES be met with the resources in terms of personnel that they need.

TOUGH: There are two primary issues that additional funding will address for increasing the use of TOUGH as an effective law enforcement tool, and those are:

- Having a TOUGH attorney dedicated to L.A. IMPACT operations
- Seeking countywide jurisdiction for abatement procedures

The current TOUGH attorney not only works on the abatement of properties L.A. IMPACT brings to her notice, but also those referred by the Los Angeles Police Department. Given the scale of L.A. IMPACT operations and the number of locations they come in contact with, more funding would mean having a TOUGH attorney whose focus truly was L.A. IMPACT, strengthening the broader efforts to address criminal activity at certain properties. Though complex for the boundaries involved, there is also the matter of seeking abatement procedures beyond the borders of the City of Los Angeles to other cities within Los Angeles County. While certainly other city attorneys and the District Attorney can be turned to in order to initiate proceedings elsewhere in the county, this requires additional effort and coordination on the part of the TOUGH attorney. The varying experience of city attorneys that do not regularly engage in abatement procedures may also hamper achieving the same quality of results that the TOUGH attorney can ensure, making it important to explore how abatement can be undertaken as a countywide effort rather than a piecemeal one that falls to different jurisdictions.

SYF: SYF consistently serves thousands of youth every year. In order to continue to maintain such high productivity, we recommend:

- Adding more staff at the Youth Academies
- Building an improved data collection and maintenance system

One of the challenges facing SYF is maintaining an appropriate youth to mentor ratio. In order to reach the desired 7 to 1 ratio in some of the larger Youth Academies, more staff will need to be hired. This ratio is critical so mentors can accommodate youth with different needs and provide them with more individualized attention when necessary. In addition, an improved infrastructure that includes data collection procedures for all continuing programs will be a great asset to the program. Creating a centralized system where all data can be entered and maintained will help ensure that data retrieval is more seamless and not affected by shifts in personnel. The addition of a staff member who can oversee data collection and reporting would be beneficial, though not mandatory, if other staff are properly trained. In order for SYF to be

able to make these changes, they will need to secure new revenue sources through donations and grants. For example, as the Director of Programs suggested, reinstating events like the Sheriff's Scholar's Gala, if done properly, can help generate the donations needed to make necessary improvements.

PD-JMHL: Limited personnel is the greatest challenge facing this program. With more funding, the PD-JMHL program can be expanded to serve more mentally ill inmates and ensure appropriate data is collected. To this end, we recommend:

- Hiring additional case managers and expanding the program to other Los Angeles County courts
- Expanding data collection processes by adding a dedicated data specialist

While the PD-JMHL program is effective, it is limited in scope. It is estimated there are over 4,000 mentally ill inmates in the Twin Towers Correctional facility (Balsalmo, 2017), and the one social worker currently working in the PD-JMHL program is already spread very thin. In order to remain relevant, the program must be expanded to include additional social workers who are available to Deputy Public Defenders across Los Angeles County. Further, social workers should not be responsible for all data entry as their time would clearly be better used working with attorneys and their clients. Therefore, a data specialist should be added to the program who will be responsible for data collection, entry and maintenance. With the addition of this person, more comprehensive data can be collected. For example, currently missing from the data is information about the following: reasons for case closure, length of incarceration (for most clients), and the number of days it takes to resolve a case (which may not be the same as length of case being open in the program). Each of these measures is important in determining the effectiveness of the program, but are currently unavailable. Relatedly, prior to the addition of new social workers, pre-program data should be collected from attorneys on the current number of court miss-outs, current length of incarceration for clients, number of days until case is resolved, and number of clients being linked with community treatment. With this pre-program data in hand, it will be possible to more objectively examine the effects of this program once new social workers are hired and new attorneys are able to participate. More complete data will help ensure that program goals are being met, and having a dedicated data specialist would help to facilitate this process.

IOW: As with each of the other programs, IOW needs to secure more funding in order to expand personnel to better serve the young people in their program. We therefore, recommend:

- Hiring a full-time case manager
- Creating a more sophisticated data infrastructure

IOW currently has only one part time case manager who is not only responsible for providing case management services to all IOW Alumni, but also entering data on the services provided. Clearly, one part time employee is not enough to fill these requirements. In order to effectively serve the current Alumni and allow for growth of the program, a minimum of one full time case

manager should be hired. Additionally, improving data processes is critical. Currently data collection is completed using the spreadsheet database created by Cal State LA evaluators, but it is very limited in its capabilities and cannot be sustained in the long run. Utilizing the appropriate expertise and technology to create a more sophisticated data collection system will help improve the quantity and quality of the data collected and streamline data retrieval and reporting. While funding will be needed to implement the new process, once in place having access to better data will help IOW secure more donations and grants that are needed to effectively run the program.

When considering the overarching premise of DEEP there are certainly multiple issues that each initiative must consider and address. Perhaps the greatest is a lack of coordination among the various components of DEEP. The drug enforcement-related initiatives have had a long and synergistic relationship, with the drug interdiction efforts of L.A. IMPACT and Cal-MMET strengthened through the assistance and support provided by CHES, TOUGH, and LA CLEAR. The inclusion of IOW, PD-JMHL, and SYF as partners in a comprehensive approach is more recent and it has not been explicated how they might actually coordinate with their drug-enforcement-related counterparts. That drug enforcement, education and prevention can work more closely in their efforts to achieve the common goals of reducing the problems of drugs and crime in Los Angeles County is not only possible, but critical. The initiatives of DEEP should explore new avenues for collaboration and strengthening of their efforts if meaningful, long-term change is to occur.

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