

# US Prosecutors and their Communities

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# From public relations to community prosecution



# Public relations

- Responses to media and public inquiries
- Individual case responses
- Diffuse criticism
- Create understanding for decisions
- Public information officer
- Media kits
- Public information kits

# Public information and services

- Accountability
- Access to justice
- Transparency
- Create understanding for roles and responsibilities
- Develop support
- Information tool kits for different constituencies
- Annual reports
- Websites
- Witness/victim services

# Community involvement

- Enhanced services for justice system users
- Better address special witness/victims needs
- Increase community understanding of prosecution
- Increase trust in prosecution services
- Community volunteers
- Community outreach programs
- Participation in community events
- Special support units

# Community Prosecution

- Partnership with communities to identify and address crime and public order problems
- Facilitate development of holistic approaches to community problems
- Empower communities and balance state control
- Stimulate community responsibility
- Problem solving teams
- Geographic decentralization
- Strategic and continuous information sharing
- Strategic planning across teams
- Resource sharing

# Example - Indianapolis

**TAG** - "Take Away Graffiti," is a county-wide effort to rid neighborhoods of graffiti. The program utilizes the services of adult probationers who have been assigned community work service hours. Under the supervision of a probation officer, probationers paint over graffiti and gang symbols in neighborhoods. The owners of these houses and businesses are victims. The program works with them to keep these markings off their property, thereby consistently showing gangs that their graffiti has a very limited lifespan. Quick removal of the markings is critical.

<http://www.indygov.org/eGov/County/Pros/Prevent/CommPros/TAG/home.htm>

# Example - Portland Oregon

**Problem – Drug Houses:** Residents of various neighborhoods were concerned about low level drug houses degrading the livability of their neighborhoods. At the time, controlled "buys" by law enforcement or their agents were required for a search warrant.

**Solution:** The Neighborhood DA regularly meet with the affected citizens and proposed using their resources and observations to prepare log sheets documenting the activities at the drug house. It was further proposed that the observations of the citizens be cross-corroborated by a police officer so that the citizens could remain anonymous. The log sheets were then attached to and incorporated into an affidavit for a search warrant. This allowed district officers and citizens to quickly resolve drug house issues.

<http://www2.co.multnomah.or.us/cfm/da/NDAP/index.cfm?fuseaction=strategies&menu=23&title=Drug%20House>



# Example – Brooklyn, New York

Teen Prostitution Prevention - The Brooklyn S.T.A.R. Project (Saving Teens At Risk) was developed to assist teens in abandoning their lives of prostitution by providing them with concrete alternatives and solutions. The program was launched in 2004, as part of a larger Teen Prostitution Prevention Initiative.

Although there are many reasons why young people turn to prostitution, from sexual abuse to drug addiction, all are greatly in need of services and a safe environment far from the reach of their pimps. The S.T.A.R. Project enables attendees to obtain necessary services, create relationships with counselors, and discover new directions in which to lead their lives. Attendees participate in an intensive, multidisciplinary program that will meet one time per week over a six week period. During the program, attendees are educated on the dangers and ill effects of prostitution, as well as the educational, employment, and housing opportunities that are available to them. Counseling and medical treatment are also available.

[http://www.brooklynda.org/Star%20Project/saving\\_teens\\_at\\_risk.htm](http://www.brooklynda.org/Star%20Project/saving_teens_at_risk.htm)

# Limits and Safeguards

- Rule of law – rights, responsibilities, codes, procedures, statutes
- Minority protection
- Conflict of interest
- Ethics and training
- Clear written policies and memoranda of understanding