

OKLAHOMA CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESOURCE CENTER

AN INITIAL EVALUATION OF
MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL DRUG TASK
FORCES IN OKLAHOMA

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FORCES IN OKLAHOMA

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ABSTRACT

After compilation of data from 101 available and variously completed program reports on the Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces funded by the Oklahoma District Attorneys Council and the Drug and Violent Crime Grant Board, this report reviewed basic findings. These included:

1. **Numerous jurisdictions--state, local, and federal--have formed task forces, demonstrating the cooperation and pooling of resources desired when these programs are funded.**
2. **The amount of activity, as measured by arrests and convictions and by seizures and forfeitures, appears impressive and clearly demonstrates performance. What is difficult to say is whether this same level of activity would have been generated even without the task forces or how this level compares with activity of similar task forces in other states.**
3. **Program participants, on average, tended to show more arrests in their "best" year for arrests after participating than in their "best" year before participating. They also demonstrated higher percentage changes in their drug arrests, on average, from 1987 through 1995 than did non-participants. Because of data collecting and reporting problems, however, both findings only indicate and do not yet prove a higher level of drug enforcement activity and success as a result of funding of the task forces.**

In light of this review, the recommendations are made to develop:

1. **a better and more thorough system of record-keeping and reporting.**
2. **a clearer statement of goals and measures of their achievement.**
3. **more investigation of the available measures used by other states and jurisdictions using similar programs to provide a basis for comparison.**
4. **more intensive follow-up on the perspectives of the participants after participation.**
5. **more incorporation of evaluation and reported data into funding decisions for these programs and other grants.**

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An Initial Evaluation of Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Task Forces in Oklahoma

Introduction

The federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 authorized creation of the Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program. Administered by the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the Byrne Program “places emphasis on violent and drug-related crime and serious offenders and on fostering multijurisdictional and multi-State efforts to support national drug-control priorities” (BJA, 1997). Officially, BJA defines multi-jurisdictional task forces as “programs which integrate Federal, state, and local drug law enforcement agencies and prosecutors for the purpose of enhancing interagency coordination and intelligence and facilitating multijurisdictional investigations” (BJA, 1995).

The Oklahoma District Attorneys Council (DAC), the state administering agency for Byrne monies, and the Drug and Violent Crime Grant Board, a representative practitioner board approving Byrne grants, have from the program’s beginning approved creation and utilization of multi-jurisdictional task forces composed of Oklahoma district attorneys, state, federal, and local law enforcement, and related agencies to combat drug offenses in the state. The recent *Drug and Violent Crime Control Strategy* made the task forces a funding priority and recommended expanding them to all twenty-seven prosecutorial districts (DAC, 1995).

In response to federal evaluation requirements for Byrne-funded programs, the DAC in 1994 completed on-site monitoring of all projects funded with 1993 federal funds (DAC, 1995). At that time the DAC also entered into an agreement with the state Statistical Analysis Center (SAC), housed in the Oklahoma Criminal Justice Resource Center (OCJRC), to analyze more thoroughly data gathered on individual programs and to evaluate the effectiveness of the task forces based on those data. This report constitutes an initial evaluation and contains recommendations for more sophisticated analysis based on these findings.

Data Sources and Methodology

The data for this report came from BJA Progress Reports (PR's), primarily "Part B--Purpose Area 2: Multi-jurisdictional Task Forces" (BJA, 1995). The Part B forms required the following information (see also Appendix A):

1. Any and all federal agencies involved in the project
2. The top three priorities of the projects
3. Status of cases before, during, and at the end of the reporting period
4. Persons arrested for drug offenses by type of offense and by drug-related activity
5. Persons arrested by drug offense and by violent offense
6. Persons arrested by race/ethnicity and selected characteristics, i.e., age and criminal history
7. Amount of drugs removed, by type, and, if marijuana, number of plants by type
8. Asset seizures and forfeitures
9. Distribution of forfeiture proceeds
10. Inclusion of specially assigned prosecutorial staff
11. Persons convicted by drug offense and by drug-related activity
12. Persons convicted by drug offense and by violent offense
13. Persons sentenced by drug offense and by type of sentence
14. Persons sentenced by offense type
15. Persons sentenced by drug offense type and by type of sentence
16. Persons sentenced by offense type (all types of offenses)

These categories constitute the basic presentation of compiled data for this report.

To date, twenty-one (21) task forces, involving sixty-nine counties, have filed reports for this study. The required forms documenting their activity were completed in varying degrees of detail and mathematical accuracy. OCJRC analysts developed a data set using the information as presented by the jurisdictions, cleaned and made the data as consistent as possible, and compiled reports for each category listed above. (In some cases, problems may still remain with the data as presented, and a later recommendation will suggest follow-up to improve the validity of the data recorded.) Following presentation of the data for each category, this report will investigate the association of the activity recorded with changes in drug arrest rates in those jurisdictions and as compared with jurisdictions not using the task forces. First, we will look at the basic data provided.

Table 1. Counties Participating in Task Forces, 1990-1995 (total number in parentheses)

1990(13)	1991(10)	1992(40)	1993(64)	1994(51)	1995(59)
Cleveland	Alfalfa	Adair	Adair	Adair	Adair
Comanche	Delaware	Atoka	Alfalfa	Alfalfa	Alfalfa
Cotton	Dewey	Beckham	Atoka	Atoka	Atoka
Garvin	Kay	Bryan	Beckham	Beckham	Beckham
Kay	Major	Caddo	Beaver	Beaver	Beaver
Latimer	Noble	Cherokee	Bryan	Bryan	Bryan
Leflore	Ottawa	Cleveland	Caddo	Caddo	Caddo
Marshall	Tulsa	Coal	Cherokee	Cherokee	Carter
McClain	Woods	Comanche	Choctaw	Cimarron	Cherokee
Noble	Woodward	Cotton	Cimarron	Cleveland	Cimarron
Stephens		Craig	Cleveland	Coal	Cleveland
Tulsa		Custer	Coal	Comanche	Coal
Woodward		Delaware	Comanche	Cotton	Comanche
		Ellis	Cotton	Craig	Cotton
		Garvin	Craig	Custer	Craig
		Grady	Custer	Delaware	Custer
		Greer	Delaware	Dewey	Delaware
		Harmon	Dewey	Ellis	Dewey
		Haskell	Ellis	Garvin	Ellis
		Jefferson	Garvin	Grady	Garvin
		Kay	Grady	Greer	Grady
		Lincoln	Greer	Harmon	Greer
		Logan	Harmon	Harper	Harmon
		Mayes	Harper	Haskell	Harper
		McClain	Haskell	Jackson	Haskell
		Noble	Jackson	Jefferson	Jackson
		Okfuskee	Jefferson	Kay	Jefferson
		Osage	Kay	Kiowa	Johnston
		Ottawa	Kiowa	Latimer	Kiowa
		Pawnee	Latimer	Leflore	Lincoln
		Payne	Leflore	Major	Love
		Pittsburg	Lincoln	Mayes	Major
		Pottawatomie	Logan	McClain	Marshall
		Roger Mills	Love	McIntosh	Mayes
		Rogers	Major	Muskogee	McClain
		Seminole	Marshall	Noble	McIntosh
		Sequoyah	Mayes	Oklahoma	Murray
		Stephens	McClain	Okmulgee	Muskogee
		Tulsa	McCurtain	Ottawa	Nowata
		Wagoner	McIntosh	Pittsburg	Okfuskee
			Muskogee	Roger Mills	Okmulgee
			Noble	Rogers	Osage
			Okfuskee	Sequoyah	Ottawa
			Oklahoma	Stephens	Pawnee
			Okmulgee	Texas	Pittsburg
			Osage	Tillman	Pottawatomie
			Ottawa	Tulsa	Roger Mills
			Pawnee	Wagoner	Rogers
			Payne	Washita	Seminole
			Pittsburg	Woods	Sequoyah
			Pottawatomie	Woodward	Stephens
			Pushmataha		Texas
			Roger Mills		Tillman
			Rogers		Tulsa
			Seminole		Wagoner
			Sequoyah		Washington
			Stephens		Washita
			Texas		Woods
			Tillman		Woodward
			Tulsa		
			Wagoner		
			Washita		
			Woods		
			Woodward		

Results of Data Compilation

Any evaluation of program effectiveness depends on clear statement of program goals by which to judge performance. Although the program performance forms were provided and contained an area for such statement, the proper form was rarely submitted or completed when submitted. Thus, strict comparison of stated goals with actual performance was difficult. Nonetheless, the forms required other data from which goals can be determined and which were provided, albeit somewhat haphazardly by program participants. If we assume, for example, that "multi-jurisdictional" implies the participation of two or more jurisdictions as a goal, then this can be measured by the number of counties and different agencies counted in task forces.

Table 1 shows the number of counties participating by year from 1990 through 1995, beginning with 13 in 1990 and increasing to a peak of 65 in 1993. While somewhat fewer participated in 1994 and 1995, the number is still comparable and represents two-thirds or more of Oklahoma's 77 counties in each year. Participation in the task forces varied by year and by county. Eight counties did not participate in the period at all, eight participated one year, four two, twenty-one three years, twenty-four four years, eleven five years, and one (Tulsa) six years. Participation was not always continuous, that is, several counties had periods of participation interspersed with non-participation. Thus, we can conclude that, to the extent that "multi-jurisdictional" counts widespread county participation as a goal, the task forces have been successful. In all, 69 of the 77 counties participated in at least one of the six years, although only Tulsa County participated all six years.

Another measure of successful participation would be the inclusion of federal agencies in the task forces. Table 2 shows the possible agencies listed on the form and the number and percentage of times each participated in the 101 task forces in the period. Not surprisingly, the DEA, FBI, and ATF, respectively, participated the most while the Coast Guard was never involved, given the relative lack of coast to guard in Oklahoma. While data from other states would provide useful comparisons if available, the involvement of seven federal agencies in at least approximately twenty percent of the task forces appears to be a successful integration of federal assets with local authorities.

Table 2. Federal Agencies Participating in Task Forces, Total

Agency	No. Of Task Forces	% of Total Task Forces Participated In
ATF	40	39.6%
Coast Guard	0	0.0
Customs	13	12.9
DEA	58	57.4
FAA	2	2.0
FBI	48	47.3
INS	19	18.8
IRS	26	25.7
LECC	4	4.0
U.S. Attorney	33	32.7
U.S. Marshall	22	21.8
Other	13	12.9

Another indicator of emphasis on the “multi-jurisdictional” nature of these task forces is the number of cases which were already underway prior to forming the task force and might have gone on anyway compared to the number of cases begun and completed during the task force period. On average, the task forces worked on 29.7 cases initiated before the reporting period but 131.1 cases during the reporting period. In addition, an average of 124.6 cases were closed by the task forces during the reporting period, with 37.3 still pending and only 22.9 dropped. Finally, 40.6% of the projects had specially assigned prosecutorial staff, indicating significant commitment. Without comparable numbers for the counties and other jurisdictions for “non-task force” activity or from programs in other states, it is hard to measure success, but these indicators do demonstrate commitment to cases involving the task forces.

Also on the forms was a required prioritization of task force functions which allows inference of specific program goals. Although provided by the federal government and perhaps omitting particular local priorities, the list, as shown in Table 3, nevertheless is extensive. Overwhelmingly, the task forces were clearly oriented toward stopping production and distribution of drugs and relatively unconcerned with attacking higher level elements of the drug trade. When asked to list their top three priorities, the task forces made distribution their first concern, street sales a farther second, and manufacturing a more distant third, with cultivation fourth. Money laundering, financial backing, diversion, and official corruption were

Table 3. Priority Rankings of Task Forces

<u>Priority</u>	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>No Priority</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Missing</u>
Distribution	56	23	3	11	82	8
Street Sales	23	29	8	33	60	8
Manufacturing	7	20	19	46	46	9
Crop Cultivation	5	13	6	48	24	9
Importation	3	4	7	78	14	9
Gang Activity	2	4	5	81	11	9
Violent Crime	1	3	7	81	11	9
Other	0	1	5	86	6	9
Money Laundering	0	0	4	87	4	9
Financial Backing	0	3	0	89	3	9
Diversion	1	0	2	89	3	9
Official Corruption.	0	3	0	89	3	9

barely mentioned. Therefore, we can relatively safely assume that arrests for production and sales and quantities and value of drugs seized will be the measures best suited to determine task force success in meeting goals.

Table 4. Persons Arrested by Drug Offense and Violent Offense

Type of Drug Offense	Number
Violent Drug	193
Violent Non-Drug	369
Total Violent	562
Non-Violent Drug	7,632
Non-Violent Non-Drug	9,143
Total Non-Violent	16,775
Total Drug	7,825
Total Non-Drug	9,512
<u>Total All Arrests</u>	<u>17,337</u>

With those parameters for understanding program goals in Oklahoma, we can turn to data on the forms detailing arrests and convictions by numbers, types, and offenders and by types and quantities of drugs seized. As Table 4 indicates, for example, over the entire period, non-violent drug arrests by the task forces vastly outnumbered violent drug arrests, 7632 to 193, just as non-violent non-drug outnumbered violent non-drug, 9143 to 369. In total, the task forces over the reporting periods arrested 17,337 persons.

Table 5 details arrests by sex, age, and criminal history. (The obvious lack of correspondence in totals of the three categories demonstrates the irregular and inconsistent reporting found on the forms submitted, which state “If detailed

Table 5. Mean Number of Persons Arrested by Race/Ethnicity, Age, and Criminal History

Race	Sex		Age		Criminal Hist.		
	m	f	<18	>18	first offender	repeat offender	Unknown
<u>White</u>	64.7	16.9	4.8	76.3	36.0	17.6	50.4
<u>Black</u>	15.9	4.0	8.4	19.1	10.2	8.4	18.8
<u>Hispanic</u>	8.6	3.4	1.0	11.7	4.7	3.5	2.8
<u>Native</u>	3.7	2.7	3.0	5.2	2.6	2.0	9.7
<u>Other</u>	2.3	1.0	0.0	2.6	1.5	6.0	2.0
<u>Unknown</u>	2.4	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0

information is not available, list totals as appropriate.”) Those arrested were predominantly white, male, 18 years of age and over, and first offenders. Of particular note, the ratio of blacks under 18 versus 18 and over, 8.4 to 19.1 (or 0.44), was conspicuously higher than the ratio for whites, 4.8 to 76.3 (or 0.06). This indicates far fewer white juveniles arrested by the task forces, relatively. Similarly, the ratio of first to repeat offenders was higher for whites, 36.0 to 17.6 (or 2.04), than for blacks, Hispanics, or Natives, 0.95 combined, indicating more white first offenders being arrested relative to race. Readers should also note the high numbers of all offenders by race whose criminal history was unknown, demonstrating a substantial need for improved prior conviction records.

Tables 6 and 7 describe the mean number of persons arrested and convicted for drug offenses, with the number of projects reporting arrests in parentheses. More projects had arrests for cannabis offenses and stimulant offenses (98 and 96

Table 6. Mean Number of Arrests by Drug Type, by projects with arrests

Drug Type	Buying	Cultiv.	Dist./Sell	Possess.	Transport.	Using	Other	Total
Cocaine	4.5(2)	0.0(0)	10.9(76)	9.6(56)	2.6 (23)	1.4(5)	3.5(15)	17.5(83)
Crack	3.0(1)	2.0(3)	11.8(58)	5.2(39)	1.1(7)	3.0(1)	1.5(2)	14.2(65)
Cannabis	3.3(11)	5.5(75)	27.1(97)	36.5(89)	25.5(26)	0.0(0)	20.4(19)	74.4(98)
Opiates	4.0(1)	0.0(0)	3.0(6)	1.8(6)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	10.0(9)
Stimulants	4.0(12)	2.0(3)	14.9(98)	15.9(81)	7.6(12)	23.0(1)	7.5(16)	30.9(96)
Depressants	1.0(1)	2.0(3)	4.1(19)	3.2(33)	2.3(7)	9.3(4)	3.0(1)	5.4(46)
Hallucinogens	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.3(21)	3.6(16)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	7.0(1)	4.9(25)
Mult./Other	2.0(2)	0.0(0)	7.7(9)	9.0(21)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	7.7(11)	16.9(20)
Unknown	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.5(2)	19.5(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.0(1)	1.8(6)

()--indicates number of projects reporting; totals may include more than one offense.

projects, respectively, with correspondingly higher total means). Arrests for opiates were not prevalent in the projects while projects focusing on depressants and hallucinogens produced low total mean arrests (5.4 and 4.9, respectively). Conviction patterns were similar, although clearly reduced in both number of successful projects and mean convictions per project. The ratio of convictions compared to arrests for opiates, 29.1 to 10.0, was higher than ratios for other drugs, indicating more success in obtaining convictions despite the lower number of arrests.

Tables 8 and 9 show the numbers of offenders sentenced and their mean sentences by months and the number of projects involved for specific drug offenses and for drug versus non-drug offenses. More cocaine and crack offenders went to prison while more cannabis and stimulant offenders went to jail and/or probation. Of those going to prison, the longest median sentences went to crack and stimulant offenders. Comparing offenders with drug only offenses to those with drug-violent, nondrug-violent, or other offenses, we see a hierarchical sentence structure with nondrug-violent offenders receiving the most severe prison sentences, then drug-violent, drug only, then other. Remaining drug-violent offenders, however, received

Table 7. Mean Number of Convictions by Drug Type, by projects with arrests

Drug Type	Buying	Cultiv.	Dist./Sell	Possess.	Transport.	Using	Other	Total
Cocaine	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	10.5(45)	7.1(31)	4.9 (9)	1.0(5)	4.5(2)	10.8(49)
Crack	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	9.6(30)	5.3(17)	5.0(1)	0.0(0)	2.0(1)	13.6(33)
Cannabis	1.9(9)	4.1(43)	22.9(63)	36.5(55)	19.9(21)	0.0(0)	20.9(11)	63.2(61)
Opiates	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.0(2)	1.0(1)	0.0(0)	1.0(1)	29.1(7)
Stimulants	4.0(6)	0.0(0)	17.2(58)	16.9(44)	9.5(8)	6.0(1)	2.8(6)	32.3(54)
Depressants	1.0(1)	0.0(0)	2.1(9)	2.2(21)	3.5(2)	7.0(2)	1.0(1)	2.8(28)
Hallucinogens	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.3(15)	2.8(9)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	5.0(1)	2.6(18)
Mult./Other	2.0(2)	0.0(0)	5.7(6)	5.5(4)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.5(2)	5.3(14)
Unknown	2.0(2)	0.0(0)	9.0(1)	14.7(3)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	9.0(1)	8.8(8)

Table 8. Mean Number of Offenders Sentenced and Mean Sentences by Drug Offense, by projects with arrests

Drug Type	Mean #	<u>Prison</u>	Mean #	<u>Jail</u>	Mean #	<u>Probation</u>	<u>Jail and Probation</u>
	Sentenced	Mean Sentence	Sentenced	Mean Sentence	Sentenced	Mean Sentence	Mean # Sentenced
Cocaine	60.3(30)	108.3(16)	20.0(5)	34.3(3)	7.4(17)	42.0(10)	13.1
Crack	12.5(17)	654.0(11)	2.8(5)	8.3(3)	2.7(9)	32.0(7)	5.7
Cannabis	9.7(44)	72.1(25)	14.9(29)	8.9(19)	41.1(37)	43.1(22)	51.8
Opiates	2.0(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.0(2)	51.0 (1)	0.0
Stimulants	8.1(46)	296.6(26)	12.7(15)	7.3(11)	10.8(30)	56.3(18)	23.7
Depressants	2.2(9)	62.7(6)	2.0(1)	0.0(0)	2.2(13)	25.7(9)	2.7
Hallucinogens	1.4(5)	84.0(5)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.5(6)	28.0(4)	1.5
Mult./Other	1.3(3)	60.0(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.5(2)	60.0(1)	2.0
Unknown	1.0(1)	5.0(1)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	1.0(1)	0.0(0)	71.0

()--indicates number of projects reporting; sentences in months.

Table 9. Mean Number of Offenders Sentenced and Mean Sentences by Offense Type, by projects with arrests

Drug Type	<u>Prison</u>	<u>Jail</u>	<u>Probation</u>	<u>Jail and Probation</u>		Sentence	Mean # Sentenced
	Mean # Sentenced	Mean Sentence	Mean # Sentenced	Mean Sentence	Mean Sentenced		
Drug Only	22.5(53)	112.1(28)	26.1(29)	18.9(15)	48.8(40)	58.6(21)	64.2(44)
Drug-Viol.	2.3(13)	197.6(8)	2.3(4)	35.0(3)	1.8(4)	4.0(1)	17.3(6)
Non Drug-Viol.	7.9(16)	245.7(6)	9.9(8)	4.5(4)	4.1(7)	13.3(3)	17.8(8)
Other	35.5(6)	49.3(6)	458.8(4)	5.3(3)	552.9(11)	31.4(7)	1605.0(5)

()--indicates number of projects reporting; sentences in months.

longer jail sentences, while other offenders and drug only offenders received longer probation sentences. Not surprisingly given the nature of the task forces, more drug-related offenses were the focus of the projects.

Tables 10 and 11 continue the breakdown of sanctions by alternative punishments and by specific drug offenses and by drug versus non-drug offenses. More projects dealing with cannabis or stimulants resulted in suspended or other sentences, as well as community service and fines. The most average hours of community service went to those convicted of stimulant or depressant offenses while the highest fines on average went to those convicted of crack offenses. Excluding “other” offenses, higher average numbers of drug only offenders received suspended sentences but non-drug violent offenders outnumbered the other categories for “other” punishments. Similarly, drug only offenders pulled higher average hours of community service as well as fines.

Table 12 shows totals of those convicted by the projects by drug/nondrug and violent/nonviolent. (Inconsistencies between the numbers in this table and those for arrests in Table 4 again reflect problems of reporting by the task forces.) Non-violent offenders were most often convicted, with non-violent, non-drug the highest category. The 396 violent convictions reflected only 2.8% of total convictions.

Besides arrests and convictions, quantities of drugs seized and the value of assets purchased from their sale are useful measures of effectiveness in accomplishing the priorities stated by the task forces. Table 13 reveals the mean amount seized per project, although the numbers for crack and multiple/other are

Table 10. Mean Number of Offenders Alternatively Punished and Mean Punishments by Drug Offense, by projects with arrests

Drug Type	Mean Suspended	Community Service Other	Community Service		Fines		Total	
			Mean	Mean	Hours	Mean	Mean \$	Mean
Cocaine	6.6(35)	5.3(16)	24.0(4)	150.0(2)	11.8(20)	\$1640.7(18)	11.8(41)	
Crack	2.9(19)	23.7(9)	2.0(4)	100.0(4)	8.7(20)	3540.3(20)	8.3(26)	
Cannabis	37.2(71)	18.2(38)	43.9(40)	187.7(27)	46.2(54)	1549.4(50)	46.5(72)	
Opiates	1.7(3)	3.0(2)	1.0(2)	120.0(2)	1.5(4)	500.0(2)	3.7(3)	
Stimulants	9.2(62)	12.3(32)	9.3(31)	321.9(16)	12.8(44)	1452.9(42)	15.8(68)	
Depressants	1.8(25)	1.0(8)	2.7(3)	300.0(2)	17.7(17)	1471.5(17)	2.9(24)	
Hallucinogens	1.3(10)	5.0(1)	1.0(1)	0.0(0)	1.8(6)	587.3(4)	2.0(15)	
Mult./Other	1.0(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	4.0(1)	825.0(4)	1.5(4)	
Unknown	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	

()--indicates number of projects reporting; totals may include more than one offense.

Table 11. Mean Number of Offenders Alternatively Punished and Mean Punishments by Offense Type, by projects with arrests

Offense	Mean Suspended	Community Service Other	Community Service		Fines		Total	
			Mean	Mean	Hours	Mean	Mean \$	Mean
Drug Only	56.0(68)	23.6(36)	47.7(42)	503.2(29)	64.3(52)	\$1863.7(44)	74.7(80)	
Drug-Viol.	2.8(5)	1.0(2)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	5.0(2)	1000.0(2)	3.1(14)	
NonDrug-Viol.	10.8(14)	48.5(13)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	21.3(7)	628.6(7)	8.7(19)	
Other	1146.9(12)	25.2(60)	525.3(9)	55.0(8)	828.3(17)	573.3(15)	708.1(20)	

Table 12. Convictions by Combinations of Drug and Violent Offenses

Offense	Violent	Nonviolent	Total
Drug	212	5398	5610
Non-Drug	184	8417	8601
Total	396	13,196	14,089

Table 13. Amounts of Drugs Seized

Type	Mean Amount
Cocaine	3.6 (kg.)
Crack	0.0 (kg.)
Cannabis	208.0 (lbs.)
Opiates	0.0 (kg.)
Stimulants	30.0 DU
Depressants	160.0 DU
Hallucinogens	84.0 DU
Multiple/Other	0.0 (kg.)
Unknown	0.0 (kg.)

clearly inaccurate and demonstrate, again, poor record-keeping. Cannabis and depressants top the list. Table 14 shows the number of marijuana plants destroyed by type and project. Hydroponic and ditch weed top that list.

Table 14. Number of Marijuana Plants Destroyed, by Type

Number of projects

destroying:	Sinsemilla	Hydroponics	Wild (ditch weed)	Other
1-100 plants	11	7	13	8
101-200 plants	3	4	4	4
201-1000 plants	0	15	7	2
1001-2500 plants	4	1	2	2
2501-5000 plants	2	5	2	0
5000+ plants	0	1	8	0
missing	21	21	20	20

Table 15 describes the number and value of project seizures and forfeitures by type of asset. Excluding "other," vehicles, currency, and weapons are subject to both the most seizures and forfeitures. The highest dollar values result from currency, then vehicles, then real property, with a combined dollar value of all seizures and forfeitures by the projects of \$5,856,385 for the periods reported.

Table 15. Number and Value of Property Seizures and Forfeitures

Asset Type	Seizures		Forfeitures	
	Number	Value	Number	Value
Vehicles	1047	\$1,218,543	681	\$ 728,186
Vessels	7	6,200	26	28,387
Aircraft	0	0	2	0
Currency	927	1,599,455	732	1,076,680
Other Financial Instruments	9	105	7	9,129
Real Property	16	420,000	7	212,986
Weapons	827	112,803	530	67,080
Other	2612	351,848	1532	94,883
Total	5445	\$3,708,954	3517	\$2,147,431

The activity described to this point reflects substantial effort on the part of the task forces and clear fidelity to their stated priorities. Their focus over the reporting periods has clearly been on distribution, sales, and production. From that standpoint, the task forces have been successful. But were they as successful as they could have been? Would similar levels of activity been achieved by the counties without task forces? Has their success resulted in demonstrable reductions in actual offenses in those priority areas, and, if so, were those reductions attributable specifically to the task forces?

As noted earlier, without data from programs in other states, national or regional standards of successes and deficiencies are not possible. However, comparisons within Oklahoma of county drug offense rates, as measured by arrests, before and after they participated in task forces are possible. So, too, can we examine drug arrests in task force counties in a given year with those not in task forces that year. (NOTE: only arrest records were available at the time for this study. Future studies will incorporate drug conviction records as well.) While this will not pinpoint all the possible influences on drug arrests in the period studied and, therefore, not definitively prove task force success or failure, it will provide useful comparisons and information for those planning future task forces. First, we will look at before/after comparisons and then task force participation/no task for participation comparisons.

Drug Arrest Rates and Task Force Participation

Participation in the task forces varied by year and by county. Eight counties did not participate in the period at all, eight participated one year, four two, twenty-one three years, twenty-four four years, eleven five years, and one (Tulsa) six years. Participation was not always continuous, that is, several counties had periods of participation interspersed with non-participation.

As noted above, one means of determining program effectiveness is to examine the performance of an agency before and after participation in a program. For anti-drug programs, since often performance varies from year to year due to non-program factors, a logical "before-after" approach would be to look at the highest level of performance before the program compared to the highest level of performance after the program. We can also assume that, even if participation was not continuous, once the program was put into effect, the context of operations for both law enforcement and for potential violators would have changed due to participation and thus be counted as an effect of participation. Applying this logic to the 69 participating counties, we see first in Table 16 the ratio of highest number of drug arrests in the pre-task force period to the highest number of drug arrests in

Table 16. County Ratios of Arrests in Before and During Task Force Years and Rate of Change in Arrests 1987 through 1995, by Number of Years Participating

Number of Years Participating	Before: After Ratios	% Change from 1987-1995
0	not applicable	89%
1	1.32	20%
2	0.73	113%
3	0.72	217%
4	0.80	178%
5	0.77	84%
6	0.69	45%
Total	0.84	109%

% change numbers omit three counties that had skewing effects on the totals due to their minimal arrests in 1987 compared to still small, but proportionately much greater number of arrests in 1995 (Alfalfa County had 1 arrest in 1987 and 30 in 1995; Marshall County, 3 and 41, and Cotton County, 1 and 28.)

the task force period, broken down by the number of years in which the county participated.

The total effect of participation for all counties in task forces, a ratio of 0.84, indicates that participating counties on average saw a 16% increase in drug arrests in their highest arrest year in the task force period compared to their highest arrest year in the pre-task force period. This does not mean the participating counties had 16% more arrests overall, but only that their “best” pre-task force year had on average 16% fewer arrests than their “best” task force year.

Note, however, that this mean ratio is not consistent for counties categorized by their number of years of participation. The counties with two or more years of participation saw between 20% and 31% fewer arrests in their best pre-task force year while those with only one year of participation actually saw almost one-third more arrests, a ratio of 1.32, in their best pre-task force year than they did in their one year of participation. In all, 21 of the 69 participating counties (30.4%) had their most drug arrests in the total period in a pre-task force year. However, 38 of the 69 (55.0%) had mean ratios below 0.84, meaning 55% saw more than a 16% difference between their best pre-task force and task force years.

Interpreting the meaning of these statistics in regard to the effectiveness of the task forces depends on whether the goals were (1) reduction in drug activity and thus in arrests or (2) increase in law enforcement which might lead to more arrests. Again, the reporting counties were rarely clear about their goals, and the priorities listed in the reports do not differentiate between the two possible alternatives. Eighteen of the 69 participating counties began their participation the next year after their year with the highest non-task force arrests, indicating an increase in drug activity, as measured by arrests, prior to participation which might have precipitated the formation of a task force. Thus, increased arrest numbers in the task force period might indicate success in meeting a newly perceived threat, even if the long-term goal would be a reduction in overall activity as measured by arrests.

Measuring increased drug activity by arrests, of course, might be misleading, however, reflecting instead a change in priorities in law enforcement rather than more activity. Similarly, decreases in arrests might signal a comparable change in priorities or loss of other resources rather than increased effectiveness. No county demonstrated a straight linear increase or decrease in drug arrest totals for a given year, revealing instead a fluctuating pattern during both pre-task force and task force periods. Looking at “best” years does alleviate the problem somewhat, but determining effectiveness will require each jurisdiction to state clearly that it expects its task force participation to produce either increases or decreases in arrests and when. As this did not happen

regularly in the material analyzed for this report, readers are left to their own interpretations of whether the 16% difference between “best” years indicates effectiveness.

Another possible measure of effectiveness is to compare the rate of change in drug arrests from 1987 through 1995 for those counties participating and those not. Table 16 also shows the rate of change for all counties by the number of years participating and for those which did not participate. Those non-participating counties saw a mean increase in drug arrests in the period of 89%. The mean increase for all Oklahoma counties was 109%. At first blush, this means that the non-participants on average had less drug crime as measured by arrests and thus might indicate why they did not see the need to participate, although their actual numbers of arrests were comparable to counties of similar size.

Breaking the participating counties down by number of years participating, however, we see more ambiguity in the data. Those participating for one year and for six years saw increases of only 20% and 45%, respectively, far below the non-participants. Those participating for four and for five years saw very comparable but smaller increases of 78% and 84%, respectively. However, those participating for two and for three years saw much greater increases over the period, 113% and 217%, respectively. No clear patterns are thus visible between years of participation and rate of increase in arrests or between participation and non-participation in task forces.

Moreover, 31 of the 77 counties (40.3%) had mean increases above the overall 109% increase for the period, leaving 46 (59.7%) with smaller increases. This indicates that a minority of the counties accounted for substantially more of the increase in drug arrests than the majority of counties. However, since five of the 31 minority counties were non-participants, this effect cannot be credited solely to the work of the task forces.

At best, we can say that Oklahoma counties varied in their rates of increase in drug arrests from 1987 through 1995 for reasons that might, but might not, include the activity of the task forces. To the extent that increases in arrests reflected changes in actual drug activity in the counties and not simply changes in priorities for law enforcement, both participants and non-participants faced increased drug activity, and some of the counties dealt with it by joining in the task forces. The non-participants saw less change in drug activity as measured by arrests than did participants. Again, however, this might simply mean that the task forces turned up more existing drug activity rather than the participating counties actually having more activity than non-participants. That is, had the non-participants joined task forces, they too might have had more arrests.

In sum, participation in task forces appeared to produce more drug arrests in high arrest years than had occurred in those counties in pre-task force years. The percentage change in the number of arrests from 1987 through 1995 was also higher overall for participating counties than for non-participating counties. To the extent that more arrests measure the goal of attacking distribution, production, and sales discussed earlier, then the task forces have been successful, although, without preliminary numerical goals set, it is difficult to say how much. To the extent that the task forces were intended to reduce the numbers of people in a county to arrest for drug offenses, however, the higher arrest numbers do not indicate success for most participating counties.

Summary of Findings

At this point we can briefly summarize the fundamental findings of this study:

1. Numerous jurisdictions--state, local, and federal--have indeed formed task forces, demonstrating the cooperation and pooling of resources desired when these programs are funded. Most available federal agencies have participated on frequent bases, and sixty-nine Oklahoma counties have joined for at least one year. Most participating counties have been involved in three or more years. One county, Tulsa, has been involved six years of the study period. Future study should investigate more deeply the reasons for joining and, perhaps more important, for not joining, both by non-participants and by former participants which did not rejoin in later years. Lacking data from other similar states, our conclusion is tentative, but to this point the "multi-jurisdictional" nature of the projects sought by the District Attorneys Council and Drug and Violent Crime Grant Board when funding the projects appears to be met.

2. The amount of activity, as measured by arrests and convictions and by seizures and forfeitures, appears impressive and clearly demonstrates performance. What is difficult to say is whether this same level of activity would have been generated even without the task forces or how this level compares with activity of similar task forces in other states. We did discover that, on average, non-participating counties did not produce as high an increase in the number of arrests from 1987 through 1995 as did participating counties. We cannot from the data, however, determine whether this was the result of task forces being more active or of those non-participating counties not having as much activity (which might explain their failure to join task forces). The activity being funded is being performed; whether it is being done at the highest possible level is not measurable with the data available.

3. Lacking data from other states and programs for comparative evaluation, we must look at historical performance (before and after task force participation) and that of counties that did not participate. Participating counties on average tended to show

more arrests in their “best” year for arrests after participating than in their “best” year before participating. They also demonstrated higher percentage changes in their drug arrests, on average, from 1987 through 1995 than did non-participants. Both findings indicate, but do not prove, a higher level of drug enforcement activity and success as a result of funding of the task forces. Better data and more in-depth analysis will have to be performed before reaching this conclusion definitively, however.

Recommendations

In light of this initial analysis of the data from the multi-jurisdictional task forces, we can make recommendations regarding the evaluation process itself with an eye toward enhancing what we know and do about the funded programs. These recommendations are offered not as criticism but as means of improvement in future evaluation.

Recommendation #1: We recommend a **better and more thorough system of record-keeping and reporting**. Completion of the required forms was inconsistent, and the data entry appeared often haphazard and frequently incorrect. For example, rows and columns might not add up to the totals presented. Statements of goals and measures for them were regularly ignored or dealt with superficially. Workshops to assist program participants in completion of the forms and collection of proper data would be very helpful in ensuring accuracy and consistency. They could also be held to develop forms and measures more suited and understandable to the goals, needs, and efforts of the participants themselves.

Recommendation #2: We recommend a **clearer statement of goals and measures of their achievement**. Goals, when stated at all, frequently have the “to do good”- nature to them, which is laudable but practically unmeasurable. Participants and funding agents needed to focus more on operational goals that can be realistically measured against performance. For example, when judging task forces, when is it appropriate simply to measure increased arrests as successful achievement, and when are declines in arrests measures of successful achievement? Some jurisdictions might see running drugs out of their area as the goal and thus have decreasing arrests over time as their goal. Others might not have hopes of running drugs out but can see having more impact on them, meaning more arrests would indicate success. Also, since measures themselves tend to become goals when one is judged by them, the measurement-setting must be more tightly linked to goals to ensure that accomplishment of measures does equate with accomplishment of goals desired by grantors. Unless these types of perspectives are thought out and spelled out, evaluation of success and of areas for improvement will remain as difficult as they proved in this report.

Recommendation #3: We recommend **more investigation of the available measures used by other states and jurisdictions using similar programs to provide a basis for comparison.** Although conditions differ in other states and jurisdictions, having information about their program performance would provide indicators of what might be reasonably expected from Oklahoma jurisdictions. Combined with historical performance by the jurisdiction and by non-participant jurisdictions, we can triangulate measures for greater confidence in our conclusions. We must also assume that conceivably all Oklahoma counties will participate in a task force in the future, removing one of the control groups for judgment that we have used herein. Having this new source of data will offset that loss. Moreover, the networking that will occur in the development of the data will likely produce secondary benefits in information-sharing that will profit the programs here. The Statistical Analysis Center, with its pre-existing network, will prove a valuable resource in meeting this recommendation.

Recommendation #4: We recommend **more intensive follow-up on the perspectives of the participants after participation.** This report did not have good information on items such as whether participation was based on a short-term emergency need to deal with an arising drug problem or on long-term planning to meet persistent drug problems better. Why did some counties participate in some years and not others? What would they change if they could to make the programs more successful? Surveys and interviews, or even focus groups, could be run to develop a source of data independent from the required data but still useful to both grantors and grantees for the maintenance and improvement of the task force concept.

Recommendation #5: We recommend **more incorporation of evaluation and reported data into funding decisions for these and other grants.** As evaluation improves and leads conspicuously into better performance, grantors can have more confidence in their funding of projects. Grantees will also realize the importance of quality data and information in receiving funding. They will furthermore see that the recommendations above help rather than hurt them and make both getting and implementing grants successfully easier to do. Grantors then can make realistic plans and strategies for combating drugs and violence with hopes of greater accomplishment and means of detecting where things can be made better. Seen in this perspective and not a “what they know can hurt us” view, this leads to a win-win situation for everyone in the process.

Conclusion

The Oklahoma District Attorneys Council and its associated Drug and Violent Crime Grant Board have used federal Byrne grant funding to promote development and implementation of multi-jurisdictional task forces to combat drugs and violence across jurisdictions. State, local, and federal agencies and personnel have combined in 101

task forces in the period studied in this report and have seen increases in the same period in drug arrests. This corresponds well with the task forces' stated priorities of stopping distribution, street sales, and manufacturing and cultivation. In terms of cooperation and activity, these task forces have done what they pledged to do.

The difficulty of evaluating these task forces lies in the poor quality of available data from the participants and from similar programs in other states. Record-keeping and reporting need improvement, and program performance criteria must be matched far better to measurable and clearly set goals and priorities. Simply put, despite the clear activity of the task forces, the data provided at this time are insufficient to allow an unqualified judgment of success. We strongly recommend an enhanced focus on data and evaluation by grantors and grantees in the future.

That said, the data also do not indicate failure. More likely, the programs have succeeded in varying degrees in achieving goals beyond what would have occurred without the task forces. Better data and evaluation should clarify and confirm that conclusion and determine how to bring all programs up to higher and more uniform levels of accomplishment. Evaluations such as these are a first step toward achievement of a system that will better serve the interests of grantors, grantees, and the public safety.

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