

**P**ublic safety services focus on youth development prevention of crime, violent or “at-risk” behavior, neighborhood safety, and victim assistance. There are two main categories of public safety activities: *prevention services and intervention services*. **Prevention services** focus on skill development such as conflict resolution and safety awareness. **Intervention services** respond to criminal activity or provide follow-up services after a crime has occurred. A few examples of prevention and intervention services are listed below.

This chapter addresses evaluation strategies specific to programs addressing public safety issues. It provides suggestions for writing outcome objectives, planning for evaluation efforts, selecting instruments, analyzing data, and reporting data.

## Chapter 8 Public Safety Programs



Intervention Programs

Implementation of neighborhood watch programs
Senior safety escort services
Sexual assault hotline services
Domestic violence programs
Assisting police departments with community policing services
Companion services for court advocacy
Assistance in victim and witness programs

Conflict resolution programs

Mentoring programs

After-school enrichment programs

Prevention Activities

# I. Public Safety Objectives - The Building Codes



**Tip: Make sure that the category of your activity matches the category of your result.**

*Prevention service results often reflect the development of resiliency or the reduction of risk factors in an individual, which are often difficult to measure. On the other hand, intervention service results generally relate directly to the reduction of crime or violence. You will encounter evaluation problems if you propose the implementation of a prevention activity, but identify a result that focuses on crime and violence issues.*

As with other AmeriCorps priority areas, writing objectives for programs addressing public safety issues requires a description of activities, results, measures, standards of success, and beneficiaries. The following describes some of the particular set of challenges for programs addressing public safety issues when writing objectives. Refer to Chapter 1 “Writing Outcome Objectives” in the reference section for more information.

## Activities and Results

When describing activities and results for programs addressing public safety issues, make sure your result falls under the public safety priority area and not a different priority area (i.e., education, or other human needs).



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**Activity:** Ten AmeriCorps members will provide after-school enrichment activities for elementary school children in a neighborhood with high crime rates.

**Result:** Children’s self-confidence will increase.

*Does this program fall under a public safety priority area or an education priority area? Providing more information about the result can help you clarify the priority area.*

**Result (revised):** Children’s self confidence will increase, which will enable them to resist pressure to engage in risky behaviors.

**Activity:** Ten AmeriCorps members will provide after-school social enrichment program for middle school youth in a neighborhood with high crime rates.

**Result:** Youth will increase their positive decisionmaking skills, thereby increasing their resiliency.

*A social enrichment program is not likely to reduce crime in the neighborhood unless those who are participating in the program are those committing the crimes. Therefore, reducing the risk of becoming involved in criminal or violent behavior is not an appropriate result. However, a social enrichment program will teach youth resiliency skills, which is important in the prevention of youth involvement in crime or violence; therefore, increasing youth resiliency skills is an appropriate result.*

As demonstrated in the previous examples, it is helpful to think through how your activity, your result, and your measure for your objectives work together to describe the outcome of your program. The table below lists possibilities of this process.

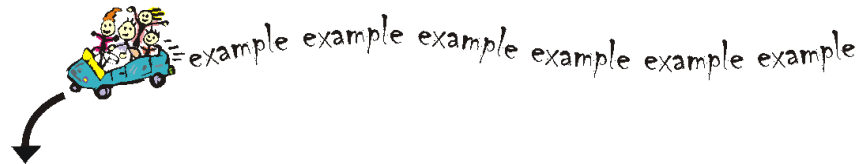
**Activity, Result, and Measure**

Service Activity	Potential Results (choose only one)	Possible Measures (select one appropriate to your desired result)
<p><b>Prevention Programs:</b>                      Conflict resolution                      After-school enrichment                      Mentoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased self esteem</li> <li>▪ Changed attitudes towards risky behavior</li> <li>▪ Decreased risky behavior</li> <li>▪ Increased skills (e.g., conflict resolution, decisionmaking)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Survey of participant attitudes</li> <li>▪ Survey of participant behaviors (either self report or report by other)</li> <li>▪ Skill test</li> <li>▪ Skill demonstration/checklist</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intervention Programs:</b>                      Neighborhood watch                      Senior safety escort services                      Community policing                      Companion services for court advocacy                      Assistance in victim and witness programs                      Domestic violence programs                      Sexual assault hotline services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decrease in crime incidents (e.g., crimes against seniors, domestic violence)</li> <li>▪ Increase in reporting of underreported crimes</li> <li>▪ Increased participation in criminal justice processes (e.g., increased willingness to testify on part of crime victims)</li> <li>▪ Increased participation in “helping” services (e.g., counseling)</li> <li>▪ Increased safety or perception of safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime/police statistics</li> <li>▪ Participant feedback surveys</li> <li>▪ Records of referrals and follow-up call information (e.g., hotline referrals and follow-up calls)</li> <li>▪ Community surveys (e.g., regarding safety issues)</li> </ul>

**Standard of Success**

The standard of success for your objectives is your best guess on what your program can achieve. Prevention activities tend to focus on an increase in skills; therefore, the standard of success will focus on positive achievement. When determining your standard of success, consider your beneficiaries. Your beneficiaries’ level of risk can range from very low to very high depending on your clients. This level of risk will affect how you determine your standard of success. Beneficiaries who have a high level of risk (e.g., low skills, risky behaviors) have the potential to show larger changes. Beneficiaries who are low risk have less room for

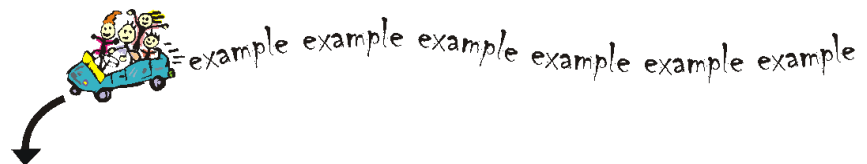
improvement and therefore, may show smaller changes. On the other hand, intervention activities tend to focus on a reduction of specific criminal incidents; therefore, the standard of success tends to focus on the reduction in crime or violence. When determining your standard of success for intervention activities, consider the limitations of resources and environment that your program may not be able to affect and alter your standard accordingly.



**Activity:** Twenty-five AmeriCorps members will assist victims of domestic violence to make personal safety plans, get temporary restraining orders and find alternative living situations or housing.  
**Result:** There will be a reduction in repeat incidents of violence.  
**Standard of Success:** (Ideal) 80 percent of victims will have no repeated incidents of domestic violence.  
*However, the lack of alternatives for victims may force them to stay where they are. Therefore, your standard of success may realistically need to be lower than you desire.*  
**Standard of Success:** (Modified) 90 percent of victims who can remove themselves from a violent living situation will have no repeated incidents of domestic violence. Thirty percent of those who cannot remove themselves from the violent living situation will have no repeated incidents of domestic violence.

## Beneficiaries

Programs addressing public safety issues can focus on their individuals or communities as the beneficiaries. Clearly describe who your beneficiaries will be and be specific about what you plan to evaluate.



**Program A Beneficiaries:** 500 victims of domestic violence.  
**Program B Beneficiaries:** Ten neighborhood watch groups and the neighborhoods they serve.

**E**valuation plans are the “blueprints” that lay out a plan for implementation according to your building codes. They describe an overall picture of what the evaluation entails and include specific information on when data will be collected, how often, and by whom. Evaluation plans consist of information in the objectives, including program activities, beneficiaries, results, instruments to be used, and standards for success. In addition, the plans identify who will be responsible for analyzing and reporting results. The following are specific tips and considerations for programs addressing public safety issues. Refer to Chapter 2 or “Evaluation Plans” in the reference section for more information.



## Community Collaboration

Involve stakeholders who have access to the data you need. Programs focusing on violence intervention often need access to police and social service statistics to show their outcomes. Make sure you involve police statisticians and social service agencies in developing your evaluation plan, so you can get the data you need.

## Baseline Data

Before you begin collecting your data, you will want baseline data for comparison purposes. For programs addressing public safety issues, especially those providing intervention services, collection of baseline data is essential. Without these data, it is difficult to show that your program “decreased” the outcome of crime and violence on the community or “improved” participants’ skills or attitudes. Measures such as police statistics may have readily available baseline data, while obtaining baseline data for measures such as community surveys requires extra effort on your part. Ensure that the police data you obtain matches the population you intend to serve in both location and specific crime (e.g., juvenile incidents vs. adult incidents).

## Confidentiality

When collecting data, organizations or institutions may consider their data confidential and not make it available to you. Investigate who might have baseline data, then consider the willingness of institutions to report baseline data and results. Some institutions



are not comfortable reporting incidents that may reflect an unsafe neighborhood or physical environment for fear of negative repercussions resulting from making these data public. Explore with the “data holder” conditions under which they would be willing to share.



**Tip: Collect samples**

To determine if data will be available to you, collect samples of the existing information during the planning process (e.g., obtain a crime report for the neighborhood in which you will be serving. With a little database help, raw police data can be turned into a customized crime report.). This can also help in establishing baseline data.



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**Activity:** Ten AmeriCorps members will implement a conflict resolution program at a middle school in a suburban area.

**Result:** There will be a reduction in interpersonal violence at the school.

**Baseline Data:** Fights that occurred on campus the previous year. *Schools may not want to report violent activity that occurred on their campus because it may indicate the school is unsafe. Without this baseline data, it will be difficult to show a reduction in fights as a result of the conflict resolution program.*

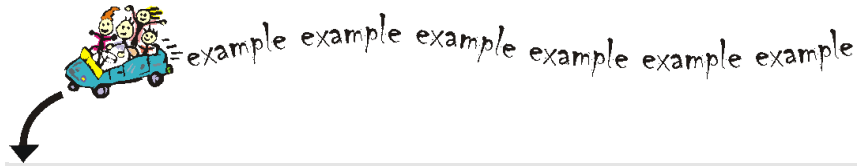
**Revised Baseline Data:** Student self-report survey about interpersonal violence in the school in the previous year.

The table below describes commonly used indicators for programs addressing public safety issues are listed, followed by suggested measures and the baseline data for that indicator.

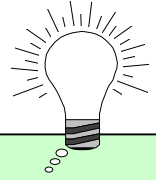
**Public Safety Baseline and Comparison Data**

Indicator	Measures	Baseline Data
Crimes committed against target population	Police statistics	Records for the target population from previous quarter or year
Skills (e.g., learned by participants)	Log recording skills developed	Initial log of interview with client
	Rubric (conflict resolution skills)	Initial rubric scores for the client
	Skills check list/observations	Pre-intervention checklist or observation
Attitudes (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy)	Parent, student or teacher self report survey, interview	Pre-service survey or interview

Selecting indicators for intervention programs can present challenges. Intervention activities often focus on reduction in reported crime as an indicator. However, sometimes crimes occur more often than they are reported. Thus, this indicator may not show the expected changes of your result. In fact, increased awareness may cause an increase in reports. By choosing indicators that are either less sensitive, or short-term (e.g., improved relationships with the police, increased feelings of safety among community members), you can show results in your allotted measurement time. The drawback to using these indicators is that they produce less convincing evidence than other harder to measure indicators. Another option is to choose indicators that are difficult to measure and then design your instruments to account for this challenge.



**Activity:** Twenty AmeriCorps members will provide a mentoring program to twenty high school students three hours per week.  
**Measure:** Involvement of youth in risky activities.  
**Revised Measure:** Youth attitudes toward risky behaviors, or attitudes towards school. *For instance, you may choose to measure youth engagement in risky activities, but measure them through intensive anonymous interviews conducted by a “safe” external interviewer.*






**Tip: Be prepared for the unexpected**


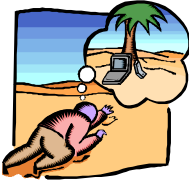

Programs addressing issues such as rape or domestic violence may find that instead of lowering the reported incidents of violence, reports among their clients increase. This happens when the “code of silence” which surrounds these crimes is broken. As you select measures and set standards of success consider whether or not the issues your program address may be under reported. If they are, then one of the results of your program may be to increase documentation of incidents.

# III. Instruments - The Hammers and Saws

Your evaluation. They are the tools used to measure the services of your program and collect information needed to determine your outcomes. As with carpentry, there is not an all-purpose tool; you need special tools for particular tasks. Therefore, the more specific the instrument is to your measurement task, the more likely you will achieve a high-quality result. The table below presents various considerations regarding instruments for programs addressing public safety issues. Refer to Chapter 3 or “Instrument Development” in the reference section for more information.

### Typical Public Safety Methods and Instruments

<p><b>Program Based Instruments</b> Examples: survey of participants, program staff feedback forms</p> 	<p><b>Advantages:</b> All data are directly related to program activities. Can be structured to provide both quantitative and qualitative data. Can be used to collect data for continuous improvement as well as impact.</p> <p><b>Constraints:</b> Time-consuming to develop. May not be able to check validity or reliability. May not see enough variation in data. May not make a compelling case because the instrument is not nationally recognized.</p>
<p><b>Logs</b> Examples: graffiti removal, hotline calls</p> 	<p><b>Advantages:</b> Useful for tracking process data. Easy to use.</p> <p><b>Constraints:</b> Limited information about impact.</p>
<p><b>Case Notes or Observations</b> Example: Notes on referral follow-up</p> 	<p><b>Advantages:</b> Provides useful data for continuous improvement. Good qualitative picture of progress.</p> <p><b>Constraints:</b> Difficult to compile and generalize. Needs a very specific guideline for consistency.</p>

<p><b>Journals</b>  <b>Examples:</b> Staff reflection, participant journal</p> 	<p><b>Advantages:</b> Can be collected at any point in time. Provide data for continuous improvement. Good insight into the thought process of the writer. Most useful when data are presented in conjunction with other types of data.</p> <p><b>Constraints:</b> Needs special skills to do analysis. Can be time-consuming to aggregate and analyze. Not consistent in data provided (e.g., participants may write on different topics, or make entries sporadically).</p>
<p><b>Action Plan</b>  <b>Examples:</b> participant contract, youth behavior goals, individual action plans</p> 	<p><b>Advantages:</b> Useful information for continuous improvement. Individualized.</p> <p><b>Constraints:</b> Difficult to generalize and report.</p>
<p><b>Records</b>  <b>Example:</b> police statistics, class records</p> 	<p><b>Advantages:</b> Assist in building relationship with partner agencies. Easy to collect (with agreement of partner agencies). Provides good backup to other types of data.</p> <p><b>Constraints:</b> May be cumbersome to compile. May be difficult to obtain (due to confidentiality). May not be aggregated and analyzed in the unit you need (e.g., number of juvenile violations in a neighborhood).</p>

## IV. Data Collection – Gathering the Raw Materials



**M**uch like lumber and brick, data serves as the “raw materials” to build your evaluation. Data collection involves administering instruments, gathering responses, and organizing responses before analysis. Perhaps the biggest issue for data collection is availability of or access to respondents. The following are some tips and considerations regarding data collection. Refer to Chapter 4 or “Data Collection” in the reference section for more information.

### Confidentiality

Because of legal issues that may be attached to programs addressing public safety issues, confidentiality and accessibility of information may be roadblocks to data collection. Both existing information (i.e., police records, school records on delinquent incidents) and other data (i.e., results of using conflict resolution skills) are affected. More often than not, programs addressing public safety issues need to collect data on issues which respondents consider sensitive. These issues may include:

- Victimization status
- Criminal activities including drug use, shoplifting or underage drinking
- Participation in gang related activities such as tagging
- Impact of personal services such as counseling, mentoring, or information and referral
- Perceptions of neighborhood safety
- Perceptions of personal safety

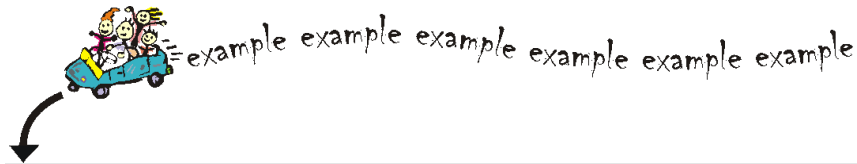
Your program may require that information about your beneficiaries remain confidential. The consequences to breaking this confidentiality can be serious (e.g., placing clients at risk of re-victimization, social stigma, or further personal trauma). These concerns can limit your ability to collect data directly from the beneficiaries. The following are suggestions to help you address the confidentiality issues in your evaluation process.

1. Data collectors should be people the respondents (or the person who controls existing information) trust.
2. Inform respondents about how the data will be used, and how it will not be used.

3. Plan for data collection to take place in non-threatening ways. The best way to ease both the burden and threat of collecting information on sensitive issues is to ask your respondents to tell you what is or is not threatening.
4. Identify alternate sources of data (e.g., area police records, aggregated school discipline records) that will allow your beneficiaries to remain anonymous.
5. Take steps to demonstrate to your respondents that their data is anonymous.

## Community Collaboration

Check to see if law enforcement institutions can provide existing information in the form that will measure your desired result. You may need to revise your desired result to accommodate the data available or identify other indicators to collect data.

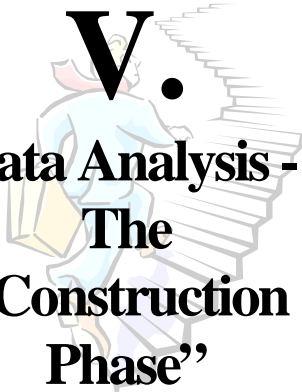


**Activity:** Five AmeriCorps members will provide a program implementing neighborhood watch groups in ten local neighborhoods.

**Desired Result:** There will be a reduction of burglaries in the neighborhoods of these groups.

**Indicator:** Because the police department tracks burglaries by district and not by neighborhood, it is impossible to determine burglary statistics for a specific neighborhood. See if data can be sorted to meet your needs or use the number of calls neighborhood watch groups make to the Police Department reporting suspicious activities to indicate a reduction of burglaries.

# V. Data Analysis - The “Construction Phase”




**Tip: Adjust data.**

Some data may require additional information that provides a frame of reference for readers before your program is able to use it. This information may include the number of people served, the location of the people served, or the proportion of the total existing population that your clients represent (e.g., crimes per capita vs. total number of crimes, calls to police in your neighborhood vs. total calls).

**D**evaluation, where you create a structure from your raw materials. The process of data analysis includes deciding on the appropriate analysis to conduct for each question or test item, preparing data for analysis, analyzing the data, and summarizing the results. For outcome data, the results of analysis should enable you to answer the question “What changed for your service recipients during your program year?” Refer to Chapter 5 or “Data Analysis” in the reference section for more information.

## Confidentiality

Screen for confidentiality. For example, if you wish to use data from student journals, students must know from the beginning that AmeriCorps members or program staff will collect, read, and use information from their journals. Remove student names and other identifying information before analyzing data. Set clear guidelines for who handles information before personal identification is removed and where information is stored during the analysis process.

**R**eporting your results serves a similar function as an “open house” for a completed home. It lets consumers and funders know what you have accomplished. Reports can range from informal talks on the results of your evaluation to formal progress reports. In general, reporting your evaluation results should include a summary of your objectives, an outline of the steps you took in evaluating your activities, and a brief description of the instruments you used to collect data. It should provide the relevant statistics and qualitative information from your data analysis as well as stories or examples to illustrate your accomplishments. Confidentiality is not only an important consideration for data analysis, but also in developing your report. Refer to Chapter 6 or “Reporting Your Results” in the reference section for more information.



### **Confidentiality**

Design reports in such a way that the identity of service recipients is protected (e.g., names, details that might identify individuals, time, location, and details of an assault). The individual writing the report may have access to confidential information to put together statistics, qualitative data, and “compelling stories.” Make sure the raw data are stored in a secure place.



