

**PROBLEM STATEMENT:** First, define the problem exactly as it exists in your particular community. Describe the nature and magnitude of the problem using valid, updated statistical data, and cite the source and date of your information. Prior data may be used to show changes in the magnitude or severity of the problem. Remember to document the problem and not the symptoms or solutions of the problem. Second, identify your existing efforts, current resources and programs being utilized to deal with the problem.

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### **PROBLEM STATEMENT:**

#### The City of Anderson Police Department

Composing and transmitting required paperwork for law enforcement related activities is time-consuming and oftentimes the final product is riddled with human errors. State and local requirements dictate that police officers confirm in writing the individual officers' response(s) to criminal complaints as well as complaints made by private citizens who are victimized (or who have knowledge of criminal activity). Furthermore, judiciary procedures require that victims of crime have a copy of a properly filled out Uniform Crime Report (UCR) in hand when they approach the court to seek a warrant or other types of relief against defendants.

In addition to the time and quality problems associated with handwritten incident reports, the South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) has mandated that local law enforcement agencies within the state begin *electronic transmission* of all incident reports to SLED by the end of calendar year 2003. Currently, in an effort to meet the interim requirements of SLED's UCR department, City of Anderson Police Department personnel manually code all officers' incident reports that are submitted to the department in hard copy form by officers. These coded reports are then mailed to SLED via the United States Postal Service (USPS). This is another step in the process that adds time and decreases the department's efficiency. The police department is currently implementing a grant-funded program to electronically submit incident reports to SLED by the end of calendar year 2003.

In conjunction with the problems associated with composing, compiling, and transmitting several thousand incident reports to SLED each year, effectively managing department resources and personnel on a limited budget requires up-to-date and accurate crime analysis. Crime rates and "hot spots" must be constantly re-evaluated and correlated to other areas and previous periods in time in order to understand the changes in the crime rates and the movement of criminal activity within a particular jurisdiction. This ability, commonly referred to as *Crime Mapping*, provides the management of a law enforcement agency the data and information that it needs to allocate its workforce efficiently, thereby maximizing the quality of life and the safety of the public with a limited amount of tax dollars. In other words, departments that employ crime mapping are enabled to work smarter, respond to crime quicker, and decrease crime rates while adding little or no additional personnel, equipment, and miscellaneous expense to its budget. The City of Anderson Police Department has historically been conducting rudimentary analysis of this type by hand. Non-electronic research of this type can take from between a few days and several weeks to complete. At best, it yields a composite of crime as of a previous point in time. At worst, the finished product is useless to law enforcement since it is often too old to use for any purpose except inclusion in the annual report.

Another problem associated with criminal incident reports is the substantial amount of paperwork that *should* accompany the case jacket of the many persons who are booked into the city jail. Additional factors that compound the red tape associated with documenting criminal incidents are currently haphazardly tied to the original in a “loose” manner that results in misinformation and lost information. The department lacks a comprehensive system that works to methodically reduce crime through analytical and meticulously maintain criminal data.

Examples of issues that can complicate documentation of criminal incident are:

- Suspects who are arrested from vehicles
- Circumstances wherein a vehicle is the primary crime scene
- Suspects who possess a substantial amount of evidence
- Suspects who have a history of assaulting officers
- Suspects who have (or have had) various types of sicknesses
- Suspects who are suspected of being connected to more than one crime scene

During fiscal year 2003, City of Anderson Police Officers responded to 34,189 calls-for service, hand-wrote 3,985 criminal incident reports and hand-wrote 1,630 traffic accident reports.<sup>1</sup> The 34,189 calls for police service resulted in arrests of hundreds of suspects and produced 2,837 criminal charges and 6,442 traffic citations. The 2,837 criminal charges resulted in actual custodial arrests, necessitating paperwork in addition to incident reports. Included in these charges are both violent and nonviolent offenders. In the aforementioned time frame, officers investigated a number of serious crimes including 1 murder, 6 rapes, 4 arsons, 45 aggravated assaults, 282 incidents of Criminal Domestic Violence, 24 incidents of Child Abuse, 3 incidents of Elder Abuse, 43 robberies, 128, motor vehicle thefts, 207 larceny-thefts, and 297 burglaries. Compared to lesser crimes, incident reports narrating investigations of serious crimes require a substantial amount of time to compose, proof, correct, and code. In addition, the manual coding now employed by department personnel uses a disproportionate amount of time and resources as compared to their other duties.

Also included in the FY03 (34,189) calls-for-service were 26 shooting assaults, 64 chases, 89 “armed suspect(s)”, 344 fights in progress, 438 assaults, 891 civil disturbances, 2,117 calls investigating suspicious person(s), 2,109 arguments, and 7,996 vehicle stops including 907 stops of “suspicious vehicles”. These are further examples of the types of calls that officers are required to document on criminal incident reports (UCRs) so that private citizens can later procure a warrant or seek other relief against criminal perpetrators through the court system.

In FY03 the department’s narcotic division made 195 General Sessions (state court) criminal cases and 214 Municipal (city court) criminal cases against known or suspected (potential) narcotics traffickers. Officers seized powdered cocaine worth \$3,510, Methamphetamines worth \$31,820, Assorted Pills worth \$1,094.50, Marijuana worth \$5,586.30, and \$32,890 worth of Crack-Cocaine.<sup>2</sup> Officers must write individual incident reports involving every drug arrest and every drug-related seizure. Narcotics investigators typically write numerous reports concerning

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<sup>1</sup> City of Anderson Police Department Fiscal year 2003 Annual Report. Page 3.

<sup>2</sup> City of Anderson Police Department Fiscal year 2003 Annual Report. Page 37. All values are “street value”.

citizen complaints of *suspected* drug activity. Recent procedures have been implemented by SLED that require criminal incident reports involving drugs to have an additional sheet filled out during the coding process. This additional requirement increases the amount of time involved in the paperwork aspect of law enforcement and decreases the amount of resources available to actually “fight” crime.

According to internal information<sup>3</sup> that was tabulated in response to the questions “How much time does the various aspects of SLED coding require?” and “What are the analytical capabilities of the current system?” the following answer was given:

It takes an average of 8 minutes to code each incident report. If a supplemental report is [necessary] it takes approximately 10 minutes for each one to be completed. Twenty percent of the reports require a supplemental report. Drug reports require a separate page to be completed for each drug that is listed on the incident report. These reports take approximately 16 minutes to complete. Thirty-two percent of the reports are drug reports. Fifty-eight percent of all reports have some kind of officer error. When [reports] have these errors it takes us twice as long to code them. Twenty-five percent of them have illegible narratives that are hard to read. When trying to decipher the narratives it could take 20 minutes or longer to complete a report...Fifty percent of our reports have been returned for errors...When we receive these reports back, it takes approximately 15 minutes to look up the information and complete a new form. The current computer system that we are using is not able to rate or map statistical information. We cannot do any kind of analysis whatsoever.

The following table depicts numerically the time involved in addressing the above referenced matters:

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u># Hours of Minutes Time Involved Coding Only</u>
Number of Incident Reports by Officers FY03:	3,985	8.0	531.3
Percent of Reports That Require a Supplemental (20%):	797	10.0	132.8
Drug Reports That Req. Additional Report Page (32%):	1275	16.0	340.0
Reports That Have At Least One Error (58%):	2311	16.0	616.3
Illegible Errors in Narratives (25%):	996	20.0	332.0
Number of Reports Returned for Errors (50%):	1992	15.0	498.0
Total Number of Hours To Meet SLED Coding Requirements:			2450.4
Number of Hours per Month to Meet SLED Coding Requirements:			204.2
Number of Hours per Business Day to Meet SLED Coding Requirements: <sup>4</sup>			9.7

As tabulated in the previous chart it takes approximately 9.7 man-hours on average per business day for City of Anderson Police Department personnel to code and index all of its UCR reports as per SLED’s manual coding requirements. In response to another question - “How many people are involved in the SLED / UCR coding process?” - six different persons were named.<sup>5</sup> This transfer of the reports from one person to another requires additional time per report that is not included in the above tabulation. We believe that it would be safe to infer that – including the

<sup>3</sup> Internal memo (email) dated December 23, 2002. Ms. Amy Sexton, Administrative Assistant to the Chief.

<sup>4</sup> Based upon an average of 21 business days per month.

<sup>5</sup> Internal memo (email) dated December 23, 2002. Captain G. Keith Smith, (Senior Captain, Director of Records Department)

inter-office transfer time – on average, every business day, the amount of time required for the state mandated process of coding UCRs is equivalent to a full time person.

In addition to writing incident reports in the filed, an extensive amount of information about suspects who are arrested must be “captured” in-house by non-sworn personnel such as booking officers and jail personnel. The police department operates a full-service detention center. As many as 41 city inmates and 68 federal inmates were being housed in the facility per month in fiscal year 2003. Many more “came through” the city detention and were immediately released on bond. During the booking process officers must take possession of all inmates’ property, protect it against loss, and return it in the same condition upon the inmates’ release (if the inmate can legally possess the item after release from detention). Property usually includes cash, jewelry, credit cards, paperwork related to their arrest(s), and other valuables.

Numerous situations occur in Detention wherein inmates may assume each other’s identity. In fiscal year 2003 this resulted in at least one inmate escaping from city detention where he was being held on a substantial bond subsequent to being charged with numerous violent crimes and drug violations. Because of the number of personnel who work in the jail and booking facilities, and due to a lack of electronic verification, the inmate was able to switch wristbands with another inmate who was being released. He then walked out the front door to freedom (for now). An electronic thumb print identifier could have prevented this escape.

Records of inmates’ past performance are kept by jail personnel in file folders that are stored in cabinets for reference. When an inmate assaults an officer or has some other sort of altercation with police or jail personnel, the incident is documented and filed away. Unless department personnel recognize an arrestee and remember a specific event concerning him, the suspect’s history can be overlooked during subsequent arrest procedures. Also, many inmates have communicable diseases and are highly contagious. The department’s current system of managing these types of inmate problems is ineffective due to inadequate dissemination of information and subjects officers to unnecessary exposure to both violence and sickness.

The department in conjunction with the city garage impounds vehicles. The garage has access to the city’s Intranet and can easily be given access the police department’s database. Currently, all impounded vehicles are “written up” on paperwork that is generally forwarded back and forth between the police department and the garage by police officers and/or fax. Sometimes the paperwork fails to make it to one of the other’s files and into the incident report. Several months or a couple of years later when the cases come to trial there are often some discrepancy as to the type of vehicle from which the suspect was arrested. Many times the condition of the vehicle is in question which further provides a smoke screen for the defense attorney to use with a jury, especially in violent cases where cars were used in the perpetration of the crime.

In fiscal year 2003 the city impound towed 889 vehicles for the city police department. Supposedly, when a suspect is arrested from a vehicle, the status of the vehicle as well as the conditions of releasing the vehicle are listed in the paperwork and a copy is provided to the garage personnel. However, approximately ¼ of the time some of the paperwork fails to get included in the case file and/or fails to make its way to the garage in a timely fashion. The department – along with the garage – has discovered vehicles that have been impounded for years and no one knows the disposition.

Inmates' visitors must provide a South Carolina (or other valid) ID and be logged into a notebook. Part of the Standard Operational Procedure of the detention facility is to check warrants on visitors while they are visiting with inmates but many times jailers are too busy attending to inmates in their care to check warrants in a timely fashion and it is determined after the suspect leaves that the police department had warrants on file for the arrest of a visitor. The police department does not have an electronic system that automatically checks for warrants on persons who visit inmates.

Finally, the city police department and the judicial department have allowed each other to have confidential access to each other's databases. Because the jury pool is now chosen from the list of all persons in South Carolina drivers who have a drivers license as opposed to only those who vote, there is a large number of persons who could be checked for warrants upon arriving for jury duty if officers had time. However, lacking an automated system to check warrants on persons selected for jury duty, these persons are often overlooked.

### **EXISTING EFFORTS and CURRENT RESOURCES**

At present, all incident and traffic reports must be hand-written. Our existing system (as of November 2003) is incapable of allowing data entry of criminal incident reports into a database. When officers are finished writing a report, they bring their handwritten report(s) to the front office where the reports are corrected and "coded" to meet SLED's interim requirements (for those department's lacking the capability to electronic submit reports). After the coding process is concluded, the reports are rechecked, copied, and transmitted to SLED via the mail. As a final step, all reports are scanned into the current information system for later retrieval, as needed. However, the existing system is incapable of any type of analysis. It is limited to simply "taking a picture" of the incident report and saving it on disk. In short, the current system is useless for analysis and has no practical application to proactive law enforcement activities. This will be corrected when the new system is up-and-running.

Although the current system is limited and inefficient, the City of Anderson Police Department is in the process of implementing a first year project to develop a National Incident Based Reporting System / South Carolina Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS/SCIBRS<sup>6</sup>). The project is funded by a grant through the SCDPS. The system will permit patrol officers who have access to a laptop computer to enter data regarding criminal incidents "in the field". Subsequently, these reports can be downloaded and electronically submitted to SLED. The department has trained three support personnel to serve as "Quality Control" persons on the new system. Those personnel will ensure that the data that is entered into the system is concise, complete, accurate, and appropriate for the program.

The current plan calls for the purchase of 25 laptop computers to be utilized by the 89 sworn officers as the officers respond to calls-for-service and open investigations into criminal activity. This will allow approximately three personnel on each of the four shifts, and three personnel in

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<sup>6</sup> The abbreviations NIBRS and SCIBRS may be used interchangeably when referring to the National and South Carolina Incident Based Reporting System.

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each of the Detective, Narcotics, Traffic, and Community Patrol Divisions to generate electronic reports. At any given time, there are approximately 11 sworn personnel on each patrol shift, 10 in Community Patrol, 11 in the Detective Division, seven to eight in Narcotics, and 12 in the Traffic Division.

In addition to patrol officers and investigators, the police department has an two-person Evidence Team (i.e. Forensic Unit) that processes crime scenes and adds a substantial amount of information to case files which often times has to be included in supplemental incident reports related to crimes. The lieutenants of the Investigative Services and Vice-Narcotics divisions review their respective division's reports to verify that the investigation(s) have proceeded with technical acumen necessary for the particular type of crime. Last of all, the Captain of Patrol Services and the Captain of Investigative Services review and critiques incident reports generated by their respective chain-of-commands to verify that charges, section codes, police action (and reaction) to suspects, and civil rights issues are in conformance with department policy, state law and constitutional requirements.

The following chart is a break down of the sworn police personnel at the City of Anderson Police Department.<sup>7</sup>

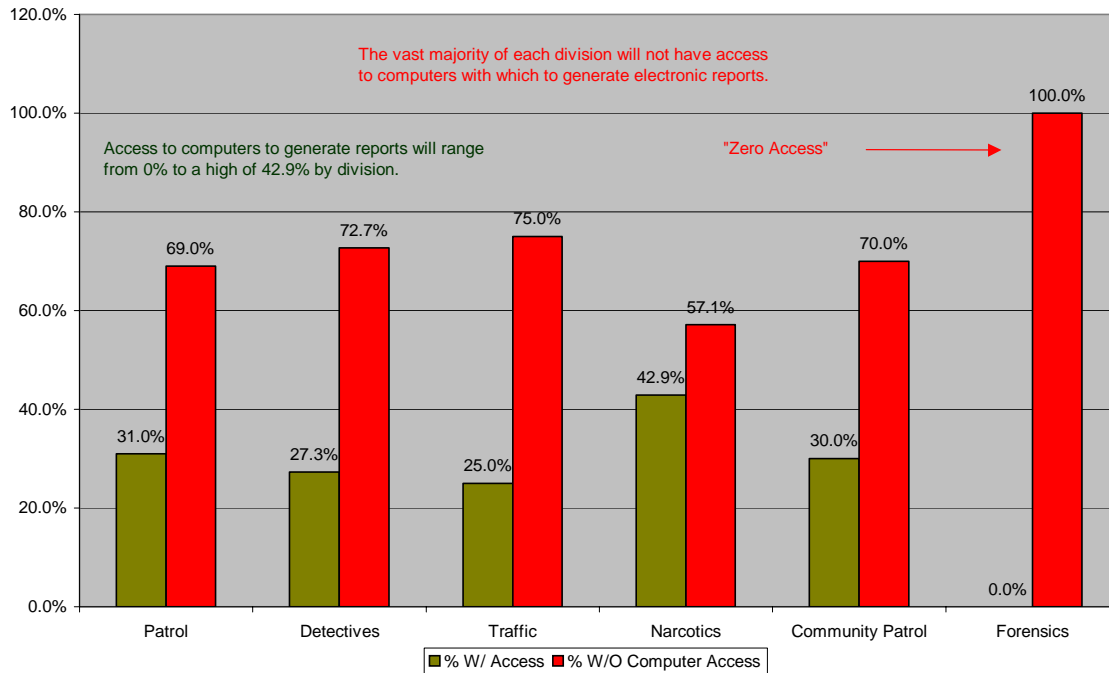
	Chief	Captain	Lieutenant	Sergeant	Officers
<b>A Shift</b>			1	1	9
<b>B Shift</b>			1	1	8
<b>C Shift</b>			1	1	9
<b>D Shift</b>			1	1	8
<b>Detectives</b>		1	1	9	
<b>Traffic</b>			1	2	9
<b>Narcotics</b>			1	1	5
<b>Comm. Patrol</b>			1	1	8
<b>Evidence</b>				2	
<b>Administration</b>		1			
<b>Support Services</b>		1			
<b>Supply Sergeant</b>				1	
<b>Patrol Services</b>		1			
<b>Chief</b>	1				
<b>Sub Total</b>	1	4	8	20	56
<b>Grand Total</b>	89				

Note the following data chart that depicts roughly the percent of each division that will have access to computers with which to electronically generate reports when the current system is implemented and the 25 laptops are in service.

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<sup>7</sup> City of Anderson Police Department fiscal year 2003 Annual Report. Page 8. Numbers are Sworn/Certified personnel (police only) whose primary function is law enforcement. Non-certified civilian personnel and officers without police responsibility and/or without arrest powers are excluded from the chart.

Percent of Division with Computer Access vs. Percent Without Access



**CONCLUSION:**

The influx of reports regarding violent crime, drug crime, and property crime is continuous. It is virtually impossible for the existing personnel to continue to write, correct, code and decipher the excessive number of error-ridden UCRs that are filled out by the department’s officers. The implementation of the electronic NIBRS program in late 2003 will greatly enhance the department’s ability to provide quality, cost-effective police services to the community. In order to maximize the effectiveness of the SCIBRS system, the majority of sworn officers as well as the support personnel involved in the quality control component of the program must have access to the system. Acquiring a sufficient number of computers to afford adequate access by all officers to the planned SCIBRS system will greatly enhance efficiency.

In an effort to evaluate the effectiveness and understand the problems associated with the implementation of a SCIBRS program, department officials have visited several agencies that have a SCIBRS system up and running. In those departments utilizing SCIBRS programs, the reporting process is more efficient because reports are “done right the first time” due to the fact that these programs prohibit officers from submitting incomplete or improperly filled out reports. In addition, SCIBRS computer generated reports can be completed much faster due to the use of drop down menus, which anticipate and limit an officer’s options during the data entry phase of any section. Finally, these programs allow the same data entered into the UCR reports to be correlated and analyzed for crime mapping purposes, and can be selected to control for any area and any time frame, thereby eliminating the time-consuming activities of copying and re-entering of UCR data into another database when analysis is needed. Finally, these types of programs are

developed to “share” information among the various modules thereby achieving a greater efficiency of information management and dissemination.

The electronic SCIBRS project has a practical application in that it will allow the City of Anderson Police Department to become more proactive in its efforts toward crime prevention via community oriented policing, rather than simply maintaining our current levels. This project enables the City of Anderson Police Department to develop and transmit reports in a more efficient and error-free manner. Furthermore, the program meets SLED’s mandates. The time saved by officers being enabled to complete and transmit reports more efficiently can be utilized by those same officers to aggressively combat crime in their assigned neighborhoods, thereby decreasing the crime rate without adding costly personnel. Finally, by developing problem solving solutions for our communities through crime analysis and mapping, the intelligence-gathering aspect of the existing community oriented policing function will be enhanced.

After extensive analysis, City of Anderson Police Department management personnel have determined that a multifaceted information system compatible with its SCIBRS program will greatly increase efficiency of department personnel and enhance the quality of life of citizens by enabling the department’s officer to arrest more offenders more efficiently.

Should the police department receive funding for additional modules to accompany the implementation of its SCIBRS system, when fully operational, the system would allow for extensive and ongoing criminal analysis as well as provide automated checks for warrants on potential criminals. These programs do not “store” criminal data but rather they “mine” the existing system for data and information that, if known by an officer in the field, can enhance the officer’s safety and improve crime control.

For instance, the department issued 6,442 traffic citations in fiscal year 2003. If the department had an automated program for checking traffic citations against the backlog of arrest and bench warrants, when these people came in to pay their fines, the system could have flagged them for arrest, if applicable. Also, if the police department adds a tow and impound component to its incident reporting system, in addition to automatically updating the criminal case file with the vehicle information, when persons other than the one who was arrested from the towed vehicle go to the shop to pick up the vehicle from the impound lot, their information can be cross-referenced from the receipt section of the city garage’s program and checked against existing warrant files at the APD. This will allow for the arrest of additional criminals at the garage. Additionally, an impound module will allow the department to track a particular vehicle across multiple users because an incident report will document everyone who was in a vehicle at the time any one of them is arrested. As the same vehicle is involved in numerous tows over a few years, investigators will be able to “tie” the various confederates together. This is especially important in drug crimes wherein people seem to “loan” and “borrow” cars from friends whom they do not know. A program of this nature would cause some serious problems for suspect defense(s) of “not guilty by reason of ignorance”.

Should the department receive funding for an inmate and visitors identification program, the individuals who are incarcerated in the city detention center and their visitors will have their identity officially determined and verified either before they are allowed to leave (for prisoners) or while they are visiting an inmate (for visitors). In addition to the persons who are incarcerated,

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this system would provide the same type of service for persons who are booked and immediately released on “courtesy summons” or personal recognizance as well as the persons who “go their bond”. Finally this type of program will interact with the full packet of SCIBRS software to automatically check warrants in the city’s files.

A program that will allow for arrestee’s cash and property to be electronically logged and/or digitally photographed can potentially add to the amount of evidence that is documented in criminal incident reports. Additionally, programs that tie arrestee’s information together with their previous arrest record and flags those persons who may pose a danger to police officers can aid in reducing officers’ injuries.

Police Department funding through the general revenue is projected to stay at its current level for at least two more years thus precluding the department from adding additional personnel or equipment without outside funding. Internal analysis indicates that the department can address an increased number of calls-for-service and more efficiently apprehend criminals by installing and utilizing intelligence gathering equipment. When fully operational, the SCIBRS program currently under development will allow the department to increase arrests and decrease the violent crime rate without adding additional long-term cost. The cost of fully implementing this project is beyond the reach of our agency’s current resources. The increased expenditure will not be feasible without outside assistance. If funding for the proposed project can be continued it will permit the police department to put more criminals in jail, at a faster pace, and keep them there longer.

