

2009 Innovations Awards Program

APPLICATION

ID # 09-W-02AZ

State: Arizona

Program Category: Public Safety/ Corrections

1. **Program Name:** Detention Liaison Officer Program
2. **Administering Agency:** Arizona Department of Public Safety/GIITEM
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9. **Description of the program:**

The Detention Liaison Officer (DLO) Program is an intelligence component of the Gang & Immigration Intelligence Team Enforcement Mission (GIITEM) within the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) which utilizes detention officers from Arizona sheriff and correction departments, who serve the sole purpose of performing illegal immigration and gang intelligence duties in jails and prisons. DLOs collect and report intelligence information regarding human smuggling organizations, security threat groups, and criminal street and prison gangs to federal, state, county and city law enforcement agencies in Arizona.

10. **How long has this program been operational?** July 1, 2007

11. **Why was the program created?**

The DLO Program was developed to collect and report illegal immigration and gang information from within the county jails and state prisons and then share the intelligence statewide with law enforcement officers.

What problem(s) or issue(s) was it designed to address?

Until now, there has been no statewide sharing mechanism for the collection and dissemination of illegal immigration and gang intelligence from inside Arizona county jails. The DLO Program is designed to breakdown the typical barriers of sharing information between detention/correction officers and police officers. Gangs, gang members and illegal immigration efforts continue their criminal enterprises while incarcerated and can provide invaluable information and intelligence regarding their current activities.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order:

- a. Completion of an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between DPS and each agency providing a detention officer
- b. Completion of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) supporting agency participation in the gang member database program
- c. County or state detention officer is assigned to AZDPS/GIITEM
- d. 40 hour training block provided for new DLOs
- e. Specific guidelines provided for sharing and dissemination of intelligence and information collected
- f. Additional gang training provided for current trends

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

Each law enforcement agency in the state has an intelligence gathering and criminal investigation unit. Many counties have multi-agency criminal investigation joint task forces. The DLO Program became a unifying source for the task forces to share their intelligence with other counties throughout the state and provide “one-stop shopping” for gang and illegal immigration issues inside the county jails. Detectives no longer need to enter jail facilities or be the sole person obtaining investigative information now being gathered and shared by the DLOs. DLOs attend local, county and statewide gang intelligence meetings where information is freely shared. Prior to the DLO Program, gang members were only being identified by detectives through their field investigations. Now DLOs are identifying gang members and those involved in illegal immigration issues in the county jails and collecting, reporting and sharing this information statewide.

Each week, DLOs report to their GIITEM supervisors with the gang member interviews completed during the week. They provide photos of the gang member and their identifying tattoos and write a short report on information about the gang member and his gang. This information is compiled in a DLO weekly report which is disseminated statewide. Also, several federal and local agencies obtain and incorporate this into their own bulletins.

Additionally, the Department of Juvenile Corrections is providing a DLO to the program to identify juvenile gang offenders. We are now notifying local law enforcement agencies when an identified juvenile gang member is released on parole back into the community. A juvenile gang release report is issued bi-weekly to law enforcement agencies throughout the state. The DLO Program is working with the Arizona Department of Corrections to expand the release report to include the prison gang members being released.

14. What were the program’s start-up costs?

The initial start-up cost was based on 15 Detention Liaison officers and two DPS GIITEM sergeants. Eighty-five percent (85%) funding of salary, ERE, and overtime totaled \$914,220. Office equipment, cameras, and computer equipment totaled \$53,550. Initial 40-hour training cost was \$11,000. Total start-up costs were approximately \$978,770.

15. What are the program’s annual operational costs? \$925,220

16. How is the program funded?

The program is funded from the Arizona State Legislature, through the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) to GIITEM through a lump sum appropriation.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations?

Passage of legislation was required. The State of Arizona's House of Representatives, Forty-Seventh Legislature, Second Regular Session in 2006, Conference Engrossed, passed House Bill 2863.

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

A laptop computer and associated software, wireless air card (for connection back to DPS from each DLO), miscellaneous office furniture, including chairs, locking file cabinets, etc., training and access to the gang database, Rocky Mountain Information Network (RMIN) website, electronic gang member identification cards (GMIC), crime information cards (CIC), access cards (so DLO's can visit DPS facilities throughout the state) and travel cards (for expenses) are all used to administer this program.

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state?

Yes, the program did originate in Arizona. The innovator is Commander Dan Wells, PO Box 6638, MD 3900, Phoenix, AZ 85005 (dwells@azdps.gov).

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states?

We are not aware of any similar programs in other states.

21. Has the program been fully implemented?

The program has been fully implemented, and as we move into its second year, we are considering how to expand and further develop the program, such as training more officers in each facility in gang member and illegal immigration recognition.

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s].

PRO

In the first full year of the program, the DLOs interviewed more than 1600 county jail inmates and identified 881 gang members who had not previously been identified to law enforcement officers. Total numbers of gang members released back into the community and illegal aliens being incarcerated are now being tracked.

Two inmates were "debriefed" out of their gang, gave up invaluable information regarding their gang, and had to be placed into protective custody in prison.

The barriers between county jails, state and federal prison, and the law enforcement community have begun to disappear because of the invaluable information and intelligence sharing. In one of many cases, the DLO interviewed a gang member who decided to roll over on his gang, giving information on the location of a meth house and names of drug dealers. The DLO provided the information to

detectives who followed up. After confirming the information, detectives shut down the lab and arrested the cookers and dealers. In another case an inmate provided the DLO with the name of a person who committed a homicide. The information was provided to local detectives who were able to confirm this through DNA and solve the homicide based on the DLO's information.

CON

The DLO Program deals with small (150), medium (550), and large (1500) county jail inmate populations. There are larger facilities where additional DLOs are necessary due to the increased gang member and illegal immigrant jail populations.

Not all DLOs are fluent in Spanish, and interpreters are not readily available so some interviews are lost because the inmate is released before an interview can take place.

Some hardcore gang members refuse to speak to DLOs because of racial or gender prejudices so information is again lost due to logistics of changing interview personnel.

DLOs are sometimes required to do regular, routine detention officer duties, such as walk the pod, man the tower, transport inmates, etc. This takes them away from their primary assignment and reduces their effectiveness.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

This program is such a resounding success that county jails are asking the DLOs to put on a one day seminar in each county to teach more detention officers how to gather gang intelligence, looking for signs of gang involvement, including tattoos, graffiti, lists of names, doodles, shot caller in the pod, and actual gang activity in the jail. They can then turn that information over to the DLO for follow up.

DLOs are being seen as experts in their detention field, and they are reaching out to their communities by presenting information to local schools and businesses. Because of their training, total numbers of interviews, identification of gangs and gang members, and identification of illegal immigrants within the county jails has greatly increased from the first year. We project that numbers will double by the end of the second year of the program.

DLOs are now being contacted directly by detectives for information, and they are working together to track and prosecute gang members.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

The DLO must be self-motivated and given complete authority within their jail to be assigned exclusively to the duties of identifying and interviewing gang members and illegal immigrants. The DLO cannot be part-time gang intelligence and part-time other duties, nor can the DLO be assigned to discipline hearings or internal investigations. The DLOs must have the complete trust of their fellow detention officers and gain the respect of the inmates so that when an inmate provides information, it will remain within the scope of the DLO Program.