

# *HIDTA and Safe & Sound*

## *Initiative*

### *Final Report*

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## Executive Summary

This final report presents an optimistic picture of the progress made in the HIDTA and Safe & Sound initiative through 2001. A successful step has been taken toward the goal of making Milwaukee's neighborhoods safer places to live, work and raise a family. The four HIDTA Task Forces and Intelligence Center are all operational. There are 98 Safe Places throughout the city serving thousands of Milwaukee's youth daily. The expansion of the Community Partners program from three to twenty areas has been accomplished with remarkable effectiveness. Highlights of key findings of this report follow, though a thorough reading of this document is needed to understand the details and nuances of the evaluation results.

### Crime Data

The news is encouraging. Violent felony crime is down significantly in the HIDTA and Safe & Sound project area. However, violent crime, and crime in general, remain unacceptably high in this area. In 2001, the estimated crime rate for select violent felony crimes was 11.2 per 1,000 residents in the project area, down from 19.9 in 1997. By comparison, in the non-project area the select violent felony rate was 7.3 in 2001, down slightly from its rate of 7.7 per 1,000 residents in 1997. This represents a major improvement in the targeted area. There are many notable accomplishments that support this finding.

- There has been a substantial decline in the number of serious violent felony offenses in the HIDTA and Safe & Sound project area. In the four years from 1997 to 2001, the decrease was 43.8% or 2,358 fewer violent felony crimes. Homicide was the only offense category without a sustained reduction.
- The reduction of violent felony crime was greatest in 2001. The difference between the project and non-project areas is most pronounced in 2001.
- The violent crime rate remains higher in the project area compared to the rest of the City of Milwaukee, though the difference has been dramatically reduced since 1997. There is moderate variation within the twenty subdivisions in terms of violent crime rates.

### Safe Places

There are 98 Safe Places in operation since the first year, 46 continually funded by Safe & Sound. This is a remarkable accomplishment. An excellent, dedicated Board of Directors and management staff is in place. Challenges to assure that Milwaukee's youth

have equal access to the highest quality programming remain. Recommendations have been made in the following areas.

- Safe Places must continue to improve the level of active participation and retention of members in order to constructively impact the lives of Milwaukee's youth.
- In order to achieve the goal of reduced crime and violence, Safe Places need to attract more teens.
- Improved coordination and collaboration between Safe Places, Community Partners and law enforcement is essential in order to continue the reduction in crime.

### Community Partners

The Community Partners program has produced demonstrable successes, based upon the evaluation data collected to date. Key findings in this evaluation include:

- The Milwaukee Police Department and the Community Partners, for the most part, are working together, sharing information and enhancing the overall safety of the target areas. Police view the Community Partners as a valuable resource and communication link with neighborhood residents.
- The door-to-door efforts and organizing activities aimed at ridding neighborhoods of drug houses and open-air markets have gained community approval and support.
- Many people who live or work in the target area of HIDTA and Safe & Sound are getting involved in the initiative in order to enhance the safety and well being of these neighborhoods. Notwithstanding, more residents and business people are needed to work with law enforcement and Community Partners in order to consolidate and improve upon the progress that has been made against crime and disorder.

### Overall Findings

Violent felony crime is down significantly in the project area. Collaboration between the three elements of this initiative: tough law enforcement, Safe Places and Community Partners have played a major role in enhancing public safety in the twenty neighborhoods that make up the project area. Although this evaluation points to many of the accomplishments in this area, more work is needed to improve the communication, understanding and collaboration between these entities.