

Save Our Streets evaluation summary

The evaluation of the *Save Our Streets* program was designed to assess the program's effectiveness by comparing youth knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors before and after program participation. Evaluation data were collected using survey instruments developed by Caliber Associates and program staff.

The evaluation findings indicate that this program has positive influences on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors of the participants. Most importantly, regular participants are shown to have fewer re-arrests and among those re-arrested, to have far fewer arrests for weapons-related charges than youth who did not participate or did not participate regularly.

Analysis of changes in participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors revealed the following:

Legal knowledge

At the start of the program, none of the participants answered more than 60% of the items correctly but by the end of the program 98.8% of the participants completed the survey with passing marks.

Conflict resolution skills

Participants, on average, showed significant improvement in all five conflict resolution skills with youth improving most in their ability to generate and evaluate options and prepare for negotiation.

Attitudes and behaviors towards the court system, gun possession, and violent behaviors

On average, participants tended to report a slight increase in their negative behaviors and slightly less positive attitudes by the end of the program period. A closer examination of the negative behavioral changes reported indicate that the increased reporting of negative behavior at the end of the program may be a function of the participants' increasing willingness to self-report after spending time in the program.

Rates of Re-arrest

Records from the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, Social Services Division, Family Branch, were examined to determine the short-term impact of the SOS program on participants' returns to court. The results of this examination are presented in the exhibit below.

Youth Rates of Re-Arrest			
Population	N	Rate of Re-Arrest	
		Any Offense	Weapons Only
Baseline (Youth who never entered or attended fewer than 3 classes)	97	38.1%	19.6%
Graduates (Youth who completed at least 3 classes)	79	25.3%	1.3%*

**Indicates a statistically significant difference in the proportion of baseline and graduate youth re-arrested for each offense category.*

As shown in the previous exhibit, a significantly smaller proportion of graduates were re-arrested for delinquent offenses and weapons-related charges than youth who never entered the program or attended fewer than three classes. In addition, when youth had meaningful exposure to the program there was a significant reduction in their rate of re-arrest. Youth who attended three or more classes had re-arrest rates that were one-third (33.6%) lower than those youth who did not enter the program or had limited exposure. Most importantly, youth who attended at least three classes had re-arrest rates for weapons-related charges that were more than ninety percent (93.5%) lower than youth who failed to attend at least three classes.