



# City of New Bedford

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

95-53

MAYOR  
ROSEMARY S. TIERNEY

133 William Street  
New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740  
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Fax: 508-991-6189

July 21, 1995

Mr. John Lusardi  
Police Education Research Foundation  
1120 Connecticut Avenue NW  
Suite 930  
Washington, DC 20037

Dear Mr. Lusardi,

Community Policing, in partnership with the New Bedford Housing Authority, was implemented in the City of New Bedford in 1993. To date, this innovative program has far exceeded the expectations of many while setting a course for continued, aggressive growth.

The Community Policing program, with a staff of twenty one police officers, operates out of three elementary school substations and one business district substation. To date, our police officers have cultivated positive relationships with youngsters in 18 of New Bedford's 23 elementary schools and are involved in a number of educational programs such as GED preparation, English as a Second Language, probation, homework night and fun night. This work has resulted in additional teamwork as the New Bedford School Department has committed to opening gymnasiums for additional after school programs in five of the City's schools beginning in the fall of 1995.

Our police officers have also become an integral part of neighborhoods, walking the beat while forging partnerships with neighborhood groups and residents. It is my belief that New Bedford's Community Policing Program proved an integral part in the dramatic decrease in crime, with the crime rate falling 27-percent in 1994.

The City of New Bedford is extremely proud of the New Bedford Neighborhood Policing Partnership and respectfully submits this application for the Herman Goldstein Award for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rosemary S. Tierney  
Mayor

## **Problem Oriented Policing in the City of New Bedford, Massachusetts**

In 1991 New Bedford was getting a lot of attention. Headlines and sound bites screamed out the bad news. **"Most violent city in New England"**. But that wasn't all. Double digit unemployment soared to the point where the city had one of the ten highest jobless rates in the nation.

As the city's manufacturing base rapidly eroded, tax revenues plummeted. Budgetary restraints forced cutbacks of youth activities, educational programs and social support systems. Drug-related crime skyrocketed and juvenile crime was on the rise.

An understaffed police department was working beyond realistic capacity. Overburdened social service providers were having increasing difficulty maintaining an ever-expanding case load. City departments strained with the weight of fiscal cut backs. By 1992 tensions escalated to a point where the city was at war with itself with financial boundaries marking the battle zones.

At this time the New Bedford Housing Authority was awarded \$250,000 under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Public Housing Drug Elimination Program. In November of 1992, supplementary police details were dispatched to crime ridden low income developments. Strong partnerships were quickly forged between the Authority, police and residents as the targeted developments quickly stabilized.

By February of 1993, the city was exploring an innovative law enforcement concept called Community Oriented Policing. The approach began with a simple meeting between Mayor Rosemary Tierney and Joseph S. Finnerty, Executive Director of the New Bedford Housing Authority. Aware of the immense turf

barriers before them, the two leaders determined that a gradual approach was warranted. The course of action was to be slow and deliberate, beginning with matching contributions from the Housing Authority and Community Development Block Grants to pick up the \$300,000 price tag of a Neighborhood Policing pilot program targeting the Mt. Pleasant School District.

The Mt. Pleasant School District was targeted as the demonstration project for a variety of reasons. With three large developments and scattered sites, more than 600 families in the District reside in public housing. About 800 youngsters live in these developments, 85% of whom are aged 13 and under. The City and Housing Authority contributions to neighborhood policing demonstrate a joint commitment to all residents.

In addition, as an Accelerated School, the Mt. Pleasant School was already working with the community as a whole. With a staff that was meeting regularly with parents, neighborhood, City and Housing Authority representatives, the school had a successful track record in breaking down barriers. It was also considered "neutral territory" between public and private housing residents.

With a decision made regarding location and funding sources, planning began. Initial meetings were limited to representation from the Mayor, the New Bedford Police Department, Mr. Finnerty, the Mount Pleasant School, the city's Parks and Recreation Department and the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood Association. A goal was set to implement neighborhood policing in November of 1993, with a substation in the Mount Pleasant School and offices in neighboring public housing developments.

The group maintained that two needs had to be addressed before neighborhood policing could start:

- 1. Training of police officers and community members in the concept of neighborhood policing who would then educate others;**

*As a result teams of police officers, community members, NBHA staff and residents were dispatched to numerous intensive training sessions throughout*

*the country. As the teams returned to the community, they met with others who had received similar training. They spread the word about Neighborhood policing and invited others to share in the process of rebuilding the community. Today the Neighborhood Policing Advisory Coalition boasts more than 50 member agencies sharing the motto "Unity through Community." Two subcommittees have been formed; one which meets weekly to address educational and program issues and; a Law Enforcement Subcommittee which meets bi-monthly to address criminal justice issues. Both groups report to the Coalition as a whole on a monthly basis. Through this process services are coordinated and problems are addressed in a timely and efficient manner.*

**2. A lack of youth and community activities in the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood**

*A playground and basketball court were to be constructed on school property. Children and parents participated in the process through several meetings with school architects. Concerns of neighbors were alleviated through a series of meetings.*

*The result was two-fold: a summer academic program for neighborhood youngsters supported by private foundations and Community Development funds and; an afternoon recreation program run by the City of New Bedford.*

*The success of 1993, prompted NBHA to fund the academic summer program and a youth basketball league in 1994. This year the program has expanded to serve about 100 youngsters daily and more than a dozen adults needing academic remediation.*

*At the end of the 1993 summer programs, the entire neighborhood celebrated their accomplishments with a community cookout attended by more*

than 300. The second annual cookout attracted more than 500 neighbors and **this year's event is expected to be even larger.**

*Now, peer leader groups meet weekly at the school. There are homework nights and tutoring sessions. Each week during the academic year boasts a homework night for students. There are dances, training sessions and a host of services centralized at the school. Community police officers take an active role in all aspects of "their school."*

*As a result of the efforts at the Mount Pleasant School the number of youngsters living in private housing enrolling in the school is on the rise. The community is working together for the betterment of all.*

*Today, crime in the neighborhood is on the decline and public housing residents are becoming active participants in their community.*

Yet, like most communities that have implemented community oriented policing, one of New Bedford's greatest barriers was the police department itself. With an unresolved union contract in 1993, the program was stalled during negotiations. As a result the first year's officers were placed in the program through forced assignments. However a concerted educational effort, staff reassignments and active involvement from the Advisory Coalition resolved the department's concerns. By January of 1995, more than 50 officers applied for 4 (four) posted slots in the Community Policing Unit. When a supervisory position was subsequently posted, 12 senior officers vied for the job, which was awarded to a sergeant with more than 20 years of experience as a supervisor.

Confidence in the city's Problem Oriented Policing program is evident in the degree of participation of the Advisory Coalition's Law Enforcement Subcommittee, which includes representation from the Bristol District Attorney's office; Superior, District and Juvenile Court Probation Departments; the New Bedford Police

Department, Community Policing Unit; the New Bedford Housing Authority; Project COACH (Community Organization for Alternative Court Help, Inc.) and a variety of substance abuse treatment providers. Through their coordinated efforts:

- Probation officers from all three branches of the trial courts have regularly scheduled evening hours at the Mount Pleasant School, thereby eliminating the need for probationers to take time off from work.
- As part of the District Attorney's Alternative Sentencing Program, Project COACH coordinates Community Service work at the Mount Pleasant School.
- A \$35,000 planning grant to study the feasibility of Drug Court in New Bedford, was obtained from the Massachusetts Committee on Criminal justice.

### **Case Study**

On the afternoon of January 18, 1995 a popular New Bedford High School student who lived in the neighborhood committed suicide at the home of a neighbor. A Mount Pleasant School student was present in the home at the time of the tragedy. A community police officer was immediately dispatched to the scene.

Through the coordinated efforts of the Advisory Coalition, free counseling, support and discussion sessions were scheduled. Peer leader groups were notified. Flyers were posted and dozens of phone calls were made to notify the neighborhood of the immediate services. On the evening of January 19, slightly more than 24 hours after the tragedy nearly 30 teenagers and their parents openly shared their grief and concerns with the guidance of trained counselors.

*Community Policing Unit  
New Bedford Police Department  
25 Spring Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740*

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E X P A N S I O N

First Community Policing Substation opens at  
the Mount Pleasant School

*November 1993*

SEVEN OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO THE UNIT AND PROVIDED OFFICE SPACE AT NEIGHBORING  
PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS OF BRICKENWOOD AND PRESIDENTIAL HEIGHTS.

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Expansion to two additional community schools  
and four public housing developments

*August 1994*

**THE ASSIGNMENTS OF SIX ADDITIONAL OFFICERS BRINGS THE TOTAL UNIT COMPLEMENT TO 13**

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Establishment of additional substations at one  
community school and the city's Alternative  
High School.

*January 1995*

THE ASSIGNMENTS OF FOUR ADDITIONAL OFFICERS BRINGS THE TOTAL UNIT COMPLEMENT TO  
17 AND PROVIDES COMMUNITY POLICE FOR TWO ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS.

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Establishment of a substation at the north end  
fire station

*January 1995*

**THE PROGRAM'S FIRST EXPANSION TO A RETAIL BUSINESS AND HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL  
AREA.**

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C O M M U N I T Y   O U T R E A C H

OUTREACH BY MEMBERS OF THE NEW BEDFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT'S COMMUNITY POLICING  
UNIT IS PRESENTLY BEING CONDUCTED AT 18 OF THE CITY'S 23 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WITH  
FULL COVERAGE ANTICIPATED FOR SEPTEMBER, 1995. THREE OF THESE ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOLS NOW HOUSE COMMUNITY POLICING SUBSTATIONS.

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T R A I N I N G

ISSUES IN COMMUNITY POLICING, NEW HAVEN, CT, MAY. 1993;

NEW ENGLAND COMMUNITY POLICING AND CRIME PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP, ST. ANSELM'S COLLEGE, NH, 1993, 1994, 1995

PREVENTION IN HOUSING COMMUNITIES TRAINING, HARTFORD, CT. AUGUST, 1993;

SUBSTANCE ABUSE INFORMATION AND REFERAL, TREATMENT NETWORK OF THE MAYOR'S DRUG FREE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP, NEW BEDFORD, MA, 1993 AND 1994

COMMUNITY POLICING IN PUBLIC HOUSING, ITASCA, IL. OCTOBER, 1993.

COMMUNITY POLICING, MASSACHUSETTS CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING CENTER, CARLISLE, MA, NOVEMBER, 1993;

MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS. MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, TAUNTON, MA, NOVEMBER, 1993

FEDERAL GRANTS MANAGEMENT, HARTFORD, CT, MARCH, 1994

MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION, NBHA SPONSORED, TRAINING CONDUCTED BY COMCARE. NEW BEDFORD, MA. MARCH, 1994

VIOLENCE, A SUPERIOR COURT'S RESPONSE, FALL RIVER. MA, APRIL, 1994

MEDIA, MARKETING AND MADNESS - YOUTH VIOLENCE, FALMOUTH, MA APRIL. 1994

NATIONAL VIDEOCONFERENCE ON STRATEGIES AGAINST VIOLENCE, BOSTON, MA, MAY, 1994.

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING CONFERENCE. POLICE EXECUTIVE RESEARCH FORUM, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 1995

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES CONFERENCE, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, JULY, 1994

FOURTH ANNUAL EAST COAST CONFERENCE, US. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE. NEWPORT NEWS, VA 1994

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS EXTENSION SYSTEM - SPACES - YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING, NEW BEDFORD, MA, OCTOBER, 1994

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION, NBHA SPONSORED, TRAINING CONDUCTED BY THE NEW BEDFORD WOMEN'S CENTER, 1993 AND 1995

AIDS AWARENESS AND OUTREACH, MASSACHUSETTS PREVENTION CENTER, NEW BEDFORD, MA, JULY, 1994

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A W A R D S     R E C E I V E D

ROBERT TROJANOWICZ MEMORIAL AWARD, NEW ENGLAND COMMUNITY POLICE CRIME PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP, 1995

## NEIGHBORHOOD POLICING COALITION COLLABORATING AGENCIES

BIG BROTHER /BIG SISTER PROGRAM  
BRICKENWOOD RESIDENTS COUNCIL  
BRISTOL COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES  
CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES  
CITY OF NEW BEDFORD OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
COVE STREET NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
DISTRICT COURT PROBATION  
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER  
GOMES SCHOOL  
GREATER NEW REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL  
HAYDEN-MCFADDEN SCHOOL  
HOT WHEELS  
LATINO COALITION  
MARINERS ASSOCIATION  
MASS JOBS  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH  
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE  
MASSACHUSETTS PREVENTION CENTER  
MAYOR'S DRUG FREE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP  
MOUNT PLEASANT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
MOUNT PLEASANT SCHOOL  
NEW BEDFORD CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES  
NEW BEDFORD CORPORATION  
NEW BEDFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
NEW BEDFORD OFFICE OF HUMAN RELATIONS  
NEW BEDFORD PARKS & RECREATION  
NEW BEDFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT  
NEW BEDFORD SCHOOL DEPARTMENT  
NEW BEDFORD WOMENS CENTER  
NEW DIRECTIONS (JTPA)  
NORTH SIDE TEENS  
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
PEOPLE ACTING IN COMMUNITY ENDEAVORS  
PLYMOUTH BAY COLONY GIRL SCOUTS  
POSITIVELY YOUTH  
POTTER STREET PEERS  
PRESIDENTIAL HEIGHTS RESIDENTS COUNCIL  
PROBATE COURT  
PROJECT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION FOR ALTERNATIVE COURT HELP, INC.  
SHAWMUT VILLAGE RESIDENTS COUNCIL  
SOUTH CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
SOUTH FIRST STREET NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
SPOUTER COMMUNITY THEATER  
SUPERIOR COURT PROBATION  
THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB  
TRU-MED WALK -IN CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST 4H PROGRAM  
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT DARTMOUTH  
YWCA