



State Crime Prevention Associations in America A Snapshot -- Summer 2004

Executive Summary: Potentials, Challenges, and Next Steps

In late May and early June 2004, the National Crime Prevention Council surveyed state crime prevention associations to gain an overview of their composition, services to members, resources, and needs. Thirty associations representing 29 states -- and encompassing 57 percent of the United States population -- responded to this request. This represents all associations that could be identified as active. A detailed summary of state response status is presented on page 4.

Why this survey? State crime prevention associations (and state coalitions, which are always included by reference) represent statewide networks of those working directly with communities and their members to prevent crime and increase the community's sense of safety. They are a potent force for reaching both their fellow practitioners and the general public with prevention messages. They are a constant source of innovation. They benefit from each other's expertise and through an increasingly effective national network (the Crime Prevention Coalition of America), they can benefit from the expertise of their colleagues across the nation.

This Executive Summary highlights the potentials, the challenges, and the next steps that are major conclusions from the survey data and its analysis. The report that follows provides more in-depth data on how the associations responded to questions. The survey instrument is provided at the end of the survey for reference.

Potentials

The 30 state associations represent among them 29 states and more than half the population of the United States. These groups, already in place, offer extraordinary opportunities for localized delivery of crime prevention messages and for engaging community members in prevention program and policy action and support. Some of the state associations actually have regional components, which provide even more focus for crime prevention action. (Page 4)

Eighty percent of the associations have been in existence for more than 20 years, suggesting that they have some stable base of membership and the long-term capacity to address members' interests and needs. Their experiences can help light the way in both strengthening current groups and launching or assisting new groups in states not currently home to associations. These veteran associations can be real assets in NCPC's FY 2005 commitment to train five associations that need assistance in strengthening themselves, a training that in turn can be adapted to helping launch groups in the 21 states currently without associations. (Page 5)

Crime prevention associations have increased and broadened the categories of persons who may become members. As recently as 15 years ago, many state associations restricted membership to sworn law enforcement officers. This survey finds that for most associations, the entire criminal justice community, members of other government agencies, business leaders, and community leaders are welcomed into typical state associations, which broadens support not only for the group but for crime prevention. (Page 7)

Another highlight of the study is that associations (whose officers are elected volunteers) can find a number of benefits in engaging an executive director or similar dedicated staff person. Those associations that have executive directors have more types of revenue supporting their groups. They work with a wider range of state government agencies and state-level branches of national and federal organizations, and they engage in these working partnerships more frequently. In addition, based on the speed of responses to the present survey, groups with dedicated, paid staff are better equipped to respond promptly to requests for information. These are strong arguments for employing paid staff. But an equally strong one is that 73 percent of associations elect their officers for only one or two year terms. It was clear from interviews (and from prior experience) that the turnover of association officers often means a loss of vital continuity -- a problem not generally faced by groups with executive directors. Associations need guidance in ways to tap Edward Byrne Memorial Block Grant Funds to help initiate this strategy. Only three associations (all with executive directors) had ever tapped Byrne funds within their states. Pages 5, 8, 9)

Associations demonstrated high levels of interest in receiving help with both organizational and topical issues. Membership management (22 responses) and crime prevention-homeland security links (28 responses) scored highest in their categories. But requests for information on such crime prevention subjects as identity theft prevention, preventing crimes against seniors, and internet safety for children and adults also saw high demand, as did such organizational areas as resource development. These responses indicate a set of unmet needs that NCPC and the Coalition can and will do a great deal toward meeting, through publications, trainings, the Coalition website, and the Coalition e-bulletin. (Page 12)

Challenges

A difficulty encountered in surveying associations was the lack of criteria for effective operation and organizational health. The challenge is not so much to dictate what associations should do or be, but to suggest benchmarks that can help associations gauge their own direction and progress more consistently. Developing such criteria will be a long-term task, but doing so could provide many benefits to associations across the nation.

Two thirds of the active associations currently draw their funding from three sources -- member dues, training fees, and donations. These three sources are linked in ways that can produce a negative spiral that may be difficult for an association to surmount. Members drop out, dues decline, fewer people are there to be trained, and fewer people are linked to the association to make donations, is how a typical scenario might progress. Diversifying funding streams tends to produce greater stability and flexibility. Helping associations find ways to tap more kinds of funding sources can help strengthen state-level crime prevention and the national network. (Page 8)

A third challenge is developing and sustaining peer technical assistance (and other resources) to meet the topical and organizational needs of state crime prevention associations. These needs are diverse both in subject and (based on interview comments) in the sophistication and depth of information sought. A variety of mechanisms should be explored -- peer technical assistance, expert consultation, online training, workshops and seminars, and written materials on the Web and in print -- to identify the most appropriate for various situations. NCPD has committed to an association training pilot that build a base for meeting organizational needs, and the FY 2005 work plan addresses many of the topical needs. Keeping up with the training and information needs of associations will require a system of structured reconnaissance and regular communication.

The challenge of improving state climates toward prevention is shared by, but hardly exclusive to, crime prevention associations. Serious consideration should be given to helping these associations (to the extent that they wish it) to become effective representatives of prevention. Communicating about effective programs and policies is a worthy task for associations in addressing their state governments. (Page 13)

Yet another challenge is helping associations tap more effectively the broad base that holds much potential for them. Increased membership means increased resources of all kinds -- cash, in-kind, and individual. Yet without effective membership management, many of these associations may face the fate of one statewide group which reported that it once had 500 members but is now reduced to 50. (Pages 5-7)

Next Steps

One obvious next step is to complete the state crime prevention picture with surveys of state crime prevention programs and the state Byrne Fund administering agencies (SAAs). NCPD stands ready to work with BJA and the National Criminal Justice Association to develop the appropriate areas of inquiry and field the surveys (in conjunction with NCJA in the case of the SAAs).

NCPD will take advantage of the state forums at the forthcoming regional conferences to hold in-depth discussions with state associations leaders on many of the issues that this survey has identified, so that state groups have input on effective strategies and solutions.

NCPC's FY 2005 work plan includes a training (chiefly conducted by peers) for five state associations that need bolstering. This training will provide a framework for training to help launch associations in coming years in those states that do not currently have them, but have a crime prevention base that might support them.

The topical information and material sought by associations is addressed in NCPC's FY 2005 work plan as well. State associations will be invited to localize or otherwise promote public service advertising that discusses internet safety and preventing crimes (especially economic crimes) against senior citizens. Identity theft prevention will be a major area of information development, as will child protection. NCPC is working with BJA and others to enable the homeland security field to benefit from the expertise and organization of crime prevention in engaging community residents in terrorism prevention.

As it continues to strengthen its performance measurement, NCPC is conscious of the need to identify ways that associations will be expected to justify work in similar ways. How best to assist these groups in meeting these expectations will be among the issues on NCPC's radar during the coming year.

NCPC will develop performance measures in conjunction with BJA for each of the areas of its FY 2005 work plan, especially with respect to the Crime Prevention Coalition of America and its member crime prevention associations. These measures will not in one year be able to encompass the work that is required, but they will reflect the year's work while linking to longer-term goals.

Status of Respondents

State associations responding: 30 associations in 29 states (two in Pennsylvania)

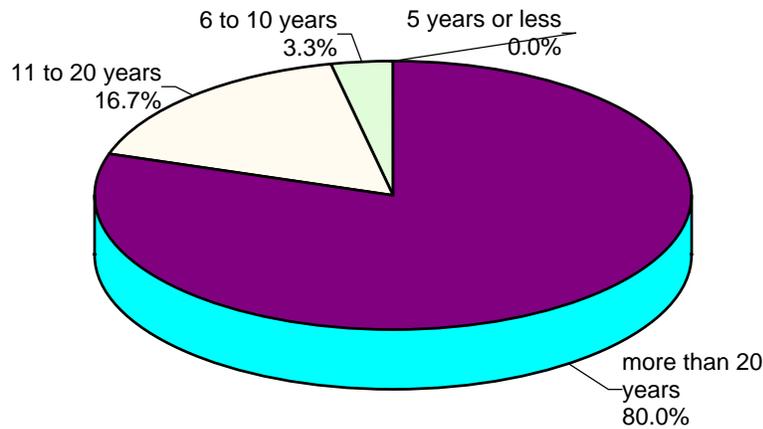
States without identified associations: 21 states (7 of which once had some form of state association)

Respondents -- Detail

State associations responding : Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania (2), South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin (30, representing 29 states)

States without identified associations (#indicates states which at one time had associations): Alabama#, Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Hawaii, Kansas#, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi#, Montana, Nebraska#, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma#, Rhode Island#, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming# (21 states, of which 7 at some point in the past 15 years had a crime prevention association)

Eighty Percent of Responding Associations Have Existed for More Than 20 Years

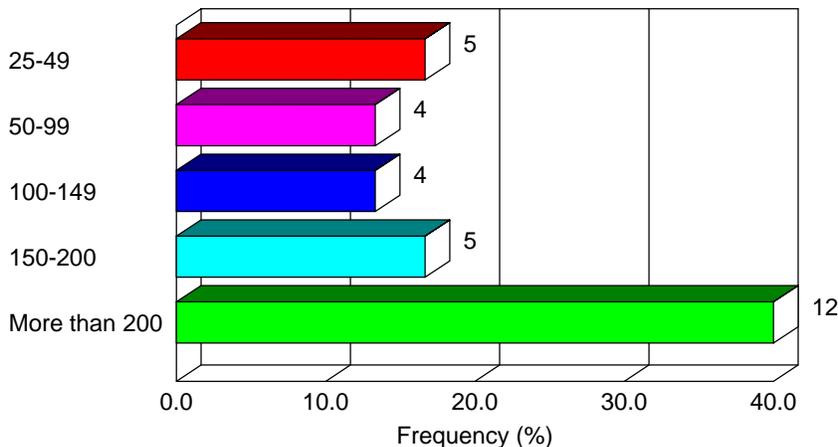


How long has the association been in existence?

Eighty percent (24) of the crime prevention groups reporting have been operating since 1983 or before. Sixteen percent (5) were started sometime between 1985 and 1993. One was initiated between 1994 and 1999.

Most Associations Report 150 or More Members

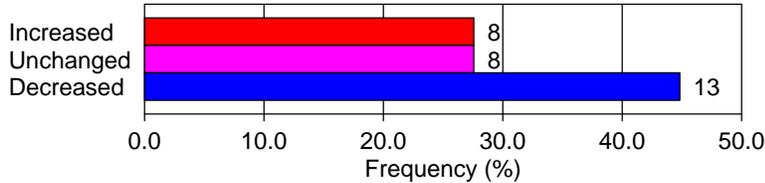
How many members does the association have? (Please check appropriate category.)



Size of association does not necessarily reflect activity, quality of action, or any other characteristic. However, it is important to note that many of the membership recruitment and maintenance activities have relatively high fixed costs -- which means that such expenses (whether donated or paid for) can consume more resources in smaller associations. Further examination of association size versus capacities will require more in-depth interviewing and assessment.

Association Membership Levels Are Generally Down or Unchanged 2001-2004

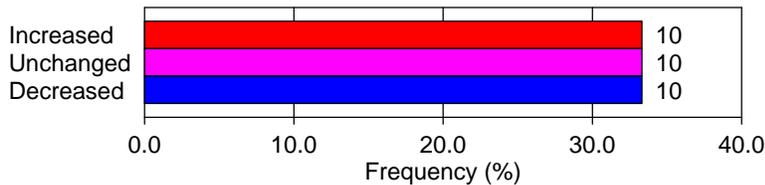
Association membership levels



Thirteen of the respondents lost members over the past three years. Eight gained members; eight saw no changes in membership. Every state presents a different climate, but conducting more in-depth assessment of situations and causes may be vital.

Association Member Involvement Shows Mixed Direction Over Past Three Years (2001-2004)

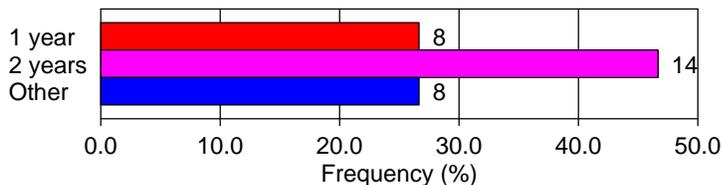
Association membership involvement



Associations were asked to indicate the overall direction of member involvement over the past three years. As this graph demonstrates, one third saw diminished member involvement, one third saw increase and one third saw no change in the level of membership involvement.

Officers' Terms Generally Short

What terms do officers serve?

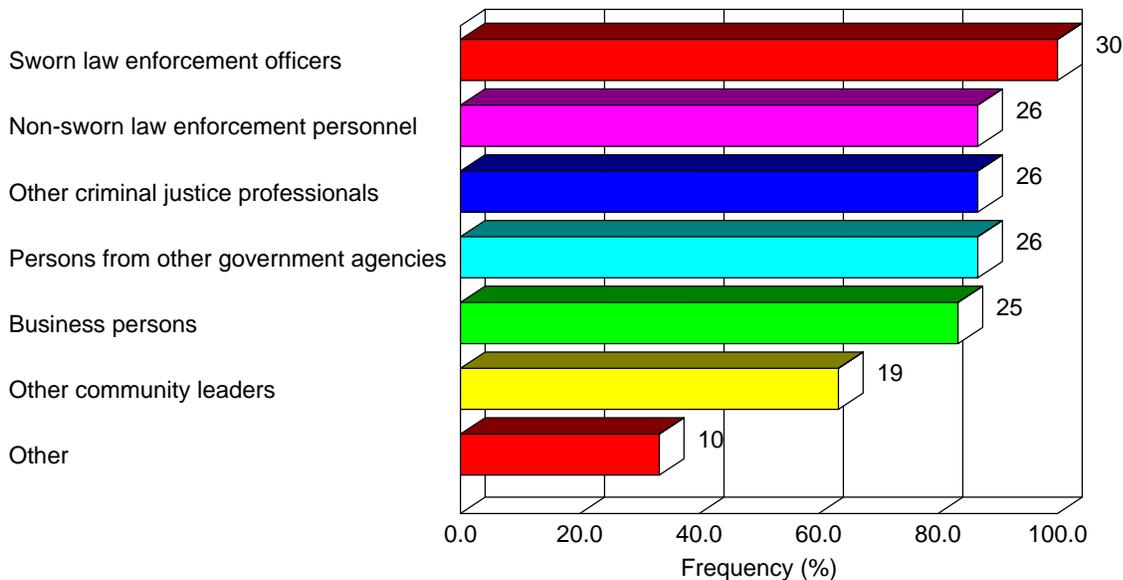


("Other" includes four year terms and a mix of other term provisions.)

Volunteer groups always face challenges in continuity when officers serve for one to two years and may or may not renew their terms -- and may or may not be aware of continuity and institutional memory needs. The issue of the prevalence of short officer terms and frequent turnover (as prior experience in maintaining coalition lists attests) argues for the value of an association staff member -- executive director or similar person -- who can provide such institutional continuity.

Associations Can Draw From Wide Membership Pool

Who belongs to the association? (Check all that apply.)



* Note: Multiple answer percentage-count totals not meaningful.

Compared with earlier days of crime prevention, associations encompass a far broader range of membership categories, reflecting the growing recognition that "crime prevention is everyone's business."

Majority of Associations Provide Several Services

Almost every association provides a core of services, including an annual conference or convention, periodic Two thirds or more of the responding associations provide a range of services, with the exception of list serves or e-newsletters, to their members. Half of the associations provide help to colleagues in other state associations. Half also indicated that they provide other services to their members. This range of competencies has the potential to be not only an asset to NCPC and the Bureau of Justice Assistance but to a state association network, as well. It is important to note, however, that the quality of these services was not assessed either by the respondents or by NCPC.

Annual conference: 90 percent provide this service
Other periodic meetings: 93 percent provide this service
Trainings for members: 97 percent provide this service
Web site: 79 percent provide this service
Structured peer to peer assistance: 77 percent provide this service
Newsletter: 67 percent provide this service
List-serve/e-newsletter: 39 percent provide this service
Help to other states' associations: 54 percent provide this service
Other types of assistance: 59 percent named at least one
 (ranging from loan of McGruff costume to crime-free multi-housing)

Funds Come Chiefly From Dues, Training, Donations; Executive Director Presence Mean More Variety

Overall	Executive Director?	
	No 63.0%	Yes 37.0%

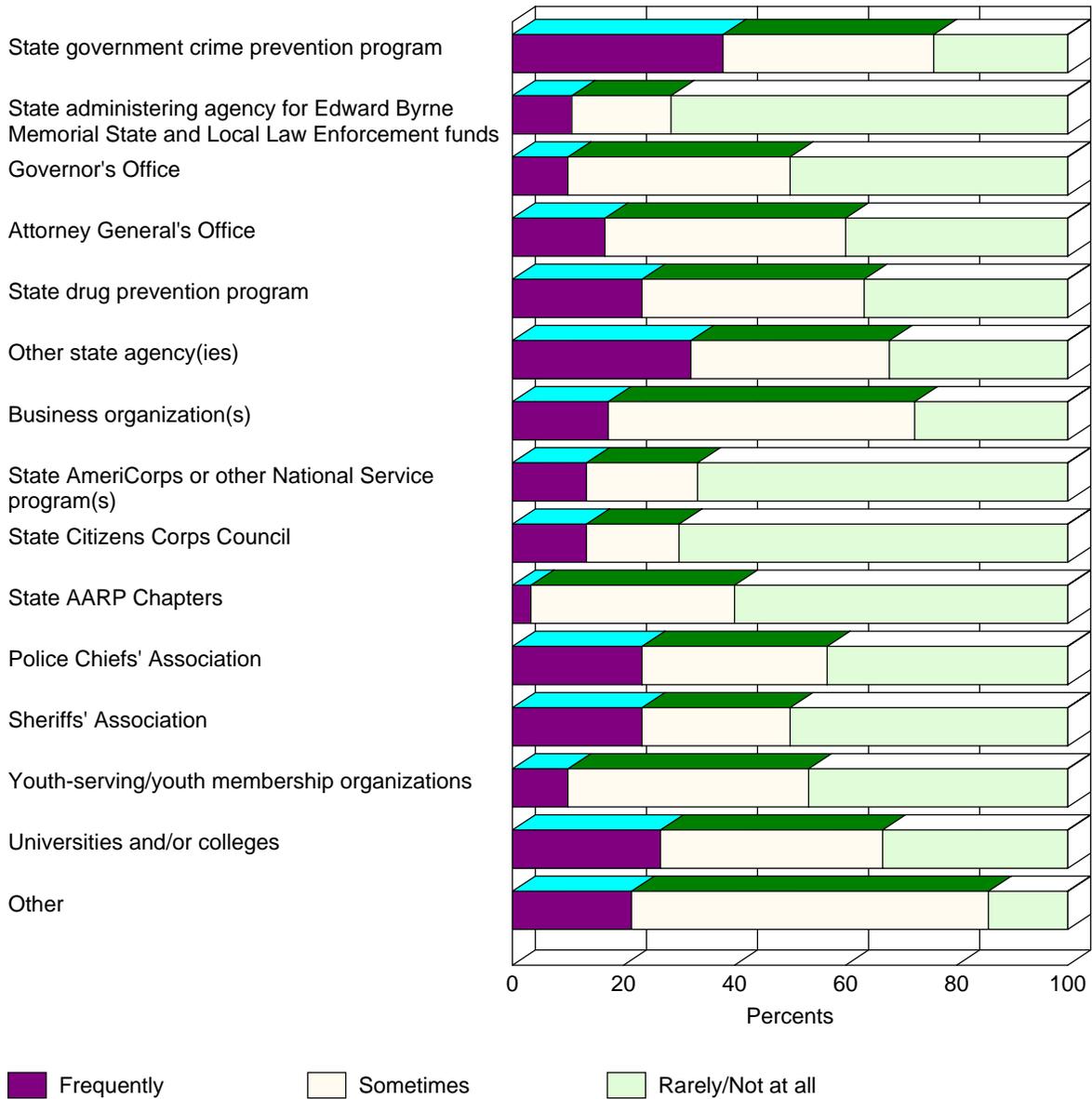
What sources of funding does the association draw upon?
(Please check all that apply)

	Overall	No 63.0%	Yes 37.0%
Members' dues	28	17	8
Donations from nonmembers or members	9	4	5
Training fees	19	12	5
State government (Edward Byrne Block Grant funds)	3	0	3
State/local government grants/contracts	8	1	7
State/local government other	3	1	2
Other	9	5	4
Totals	*	*	*

* Note: Multiple answer percentage-count totals not meaningful.

The majority of associations draw upon member dues, training fees, and donations to fund their work on behalf of members. Where an executive director is present, the associations draw on more kinds of funding sources and appear to do so with greater frequency. This difference is explained to some degree by the ability of the executive director to devote more time to making contacts and writing proposals for fund-raising, but the difference is there nonetheless. Studies of nonprofits, including associations, consistently confirm the need for multiple sources of revenue.

State Associations Could Work With More Statewide Groups More Often



State associations have many unexplored opportunities to partner with other statewide organizations and agencies. Associations work with only three of the named partners -- state crime prevention programs, business organizations, and universities and colleges -- with high frequency ("frequently" + "sometimes" at 60 percent level). Dramatically under-represented are Citizens Corps Councils, state-level National Service programs, and State administering agencies for Edward Byrne funds. Given the Crime Prevention Coalition's focus on youth in its Strategic Direction document, youth organizations are also significantly under-represented -- with fewer than 10 percent of respondents "frequently" work with with these statewide groups.

Analysis of working relationships where associations had executive directors showed that these groups had more partnering relationships with more types of organizations and with greater frequency of engagement. This point highlights another benefit of having an executive director or similar association staff person.

Detail of Replies to Questions on Working Relationships With Other State-Level Groups

	State level groups associations work with		
	State government crime prevention program	State administering agency for Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement funds	Governor's Office
Frequencies:			
Frequently	37.9%	10.7%	10.0%
Sometimes	37.9%	17.9%	40.0%
Rarely	13.8%	25.0%	33.3%
Not at all	10.3%	46.4%	16.7%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

	State level groups associations work with		
	Attorney General's Office	State drug prevention program	Other state agency(ies)
Frequencies:			
Frequently	16.7%	23.3%	32.1%
Sometimes	43.3%	40.0%	35.7%
Rarely	26.7%	16.7%	21.4%
Not at all	13.3%	20.0%	10.7%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

	State level groups associations work with		
	Business organization(s)	State AmeriCorps or other National Service program(s)	State Citizens Corps Council
Frequencies:			
Frequently	17.2%	13.3%	13.3%
Sometimes	55.2%	20.0%	16.7%
Rarely	24.1%	16.7%	23.3%
Not at all	3.4%	50.0%	46.7%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

	State level groups associations work with		
	State AARP Chapters	Police Chiefs' Association	Sheriffs' Association
Frequencies:			
Frequently	3.3%	23.3%	23.3%
Sometimes	36.7%	33.3%	26.7%
Rarely	23.3%	20.0%	30.0%
Not at all	36.7%	23.3%	20.0%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

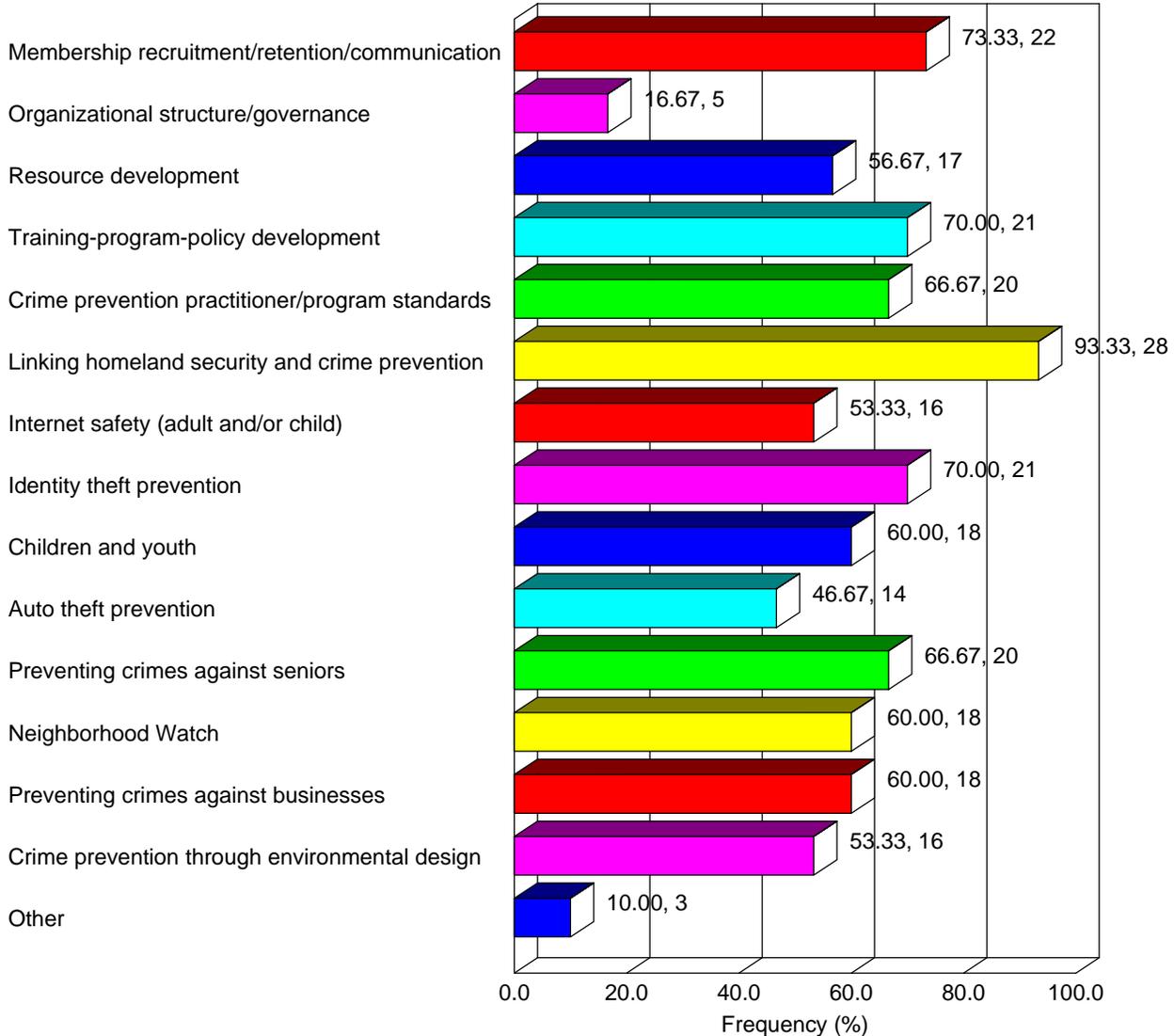
	State level groups associations work with		
	Youth-serving/youth membership organizations	Universities and/or colleges	Other
Frequencies:			
Frequently	10.0%	26.7%	21.4%
Sometimes	43.3%	40.0%	64.3%
Rarely	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Not at all	26.7%	13.3%	14.3%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

	State level groups associations work with
	State level groups associations work with
Frequencies:	
Frequently	18.6%
Sometimes	35.6%
Rarely	21.9%
Not at all	24.0%
Totals	100.0%

State associations are most likely to say they "never" work with State Byrne administering agencies, with state-level Citizens' Corps Councils, and with Corporation for National Service programs.

Associations Seek Help in Variety of Areas

Please indicate areas in which your association would be interested in receiving help. Both association operations and crime prevention topics are listed. Please check all that apply.



* Note: Multiple answer percentage-count totals not meaningful.

In terms of association management, interest in membership recruitment, retention, and communication) was high. Interest in resource development and in training, program, and policy development are nearly as high. The interest that associations have demonstrated in bettering their operational effectiveness, as well as the longevity of the associations, is almost certainly indicative of the value that their members place on these groups.

For each topical category, at least half the associations requested information, with crime prevention-homeland security links topping that list.

State Emphasis on Crime Prevention Funding, Policy, and Program Failed to Improve in Past Three Years (2001-2004)

It should not be surprising, given major state funding shortfalls, that state-level funding of crime prevention has (in associations' views) decreased in 62 percent of the cases during this three-year period. Recall, however, that almost none of these organizations worked with the Byrne block grant program, which passes through the states. It is interesting to note that 10 percent of the states reported increases in funding, and 27 percent of states said funding was unchanged. Exploring these reported differences may prove enlightening as relationships between state programs and associations and State administering agencies for Byrne funds are clarified.

State program emphasis on crime prevention, according to associations, has declined somewhat (43 percent reported this view). One third (33 percent), however, felt program emphasis had increased, and 23 percent reported that program emphasis was unchanged.

The associations reported mixed direction in policy and program support for crime prevention. Emphasis on crime prevention policy had increased in 38 percent of the states and decreased in 38 percent. Twenty-four percent reported no change over the past three years.

In a third of the cases, emphasis on programs had increased. In 43 percent of the cases, program emphasis had increased, and in 23 percent of the cases, there was no change in the past three years.

There is potential for action to increase crime prevention; the need is for a strategy that helps associations build partnerships and alliances that lead to these results and build on the increasing support noted.

Funding (from state level) for crime prevention			
	Counts	Percents	0 Percents 100
Increased	3	10.3%	
Unchanged	8	27.6%	
Decreased	18	62.1%	
Totals	29	100.0%	

Program emphasis on crime prevention in your state			
	Counts	Percents	0 Percents 100
Increased	10	33.3%	
Unchanged	7	23.3%	
Decreased	13	43.3%	

[Continuing table]

Program emphasis on crime prevention in your state			
	Counts	Percents	Percents
			0 100
Totals	30	100.0%	

Policy emphasis on crime prevention in your state			
	Counts	Percents	Percents
			0 100
Increased	11	37.9%	
Unchanged	7	24.1%	
Decreased	11	37.9%	
Totals	29	100.0%	

Associations Willing To Share Resources

More than two thirds of the associations responding indicated that they had and were willing to share resources on various topics and issues. The resources ranged from training to materials to association management techniques.

NCPC has provided to appropriate staff information on resources associations are willing to share, and staff will be contacting these groups to explore opportunities in greater depth.

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