

## Department of Public Safety Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program

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D.A.R.E. is a national school-based drug prevention program that uses trained, uniformed officers to deliver its curriculum. It is currently the largest school-based drug education program in the world and is governed at the national, regional, and state levels. The Department of Public Safety (Department) participates in the D.A.R.E. program by coordinating officer training and providing technical assistance for Arizona communities implementing or planning to implement the D.A.R.E. program. It also serves as one of five regional training centers for the national D.A.R.E. program.

**Our Conclusion:** The Department should work with the Drug and Gang Policy Council to determine if it should continue to promote and participate in the D.A.R.E. program. D.A.R.E.'s widespread use has allowed it to be extensively studied. However, studies indicate that D.A.R.E. is relatively ineffective in preventing or reducing adolescent substance abuse behavior.

**Arizona D.A.R.E.  
Seven full-time employees**

**Fiscal year 2000 revenues—\$465,000**

**Funding sources:**

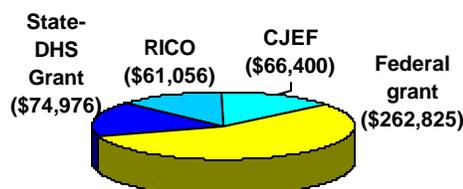
- U.S. Department of Justice grant
- Arizona Department of Health Services grant
- Criminal Justice Enhancement Fund (CJEF) monies
- Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organizations (RICO) monies

### Although Very Popular, D.A.R.E. Is Not Proven Effective

Although D.A.R.E. is the largest school-based drug education program in the world, over a decade of research has proven that D.A.R.E. is relatively ineffective. Reliable studies indicate that D.A.R.E. has:

- At best, small, inconsistent, short-term effects; and
- **No** long-term effects on students' eventual drug use.

Currently, more than 40 percent of the funding for the Department's D.A.R.E. program comes from state monies. A federal grant provides the remainder.



However, program advocates suggest the program has changed since many of the studies were conducted. They also suggest the program has other important positive benefits, including:

- Strong public support;
- Enhanced police and community relations; and
- Low costs for participating schools.

## Some Communities Are Replacing D.A.R.E.

More than a dozen communities have dropped D.A.R.E., including Austin, Oakland, and Seattle. One of the most recent communities to drop D.A.R.E. and look for a replacement drug prevention program is Salt Lake City.

To help communities address their drug prevention needs, agencies such as the U.S. Center for Substance Abuse, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the Arizona Drug and Gang Policy Council have developed guides listing programs shown through research to have positive effects on preventing or reducing adolescent substance abuse. To date, D.A.R.E. has not been included on these agencies' lists. Two programs included on their lists are:

- **Life Skills Training**—a classroom program in which students receive instruction in general personal and social skills along with drug resistance skills.
- **Midwestern Prevention Project, Project STAR: Students Taught Awareness and Resistance**—a comprehensive community program focusing on increasing students' resistance skills, disseminating the prevention message throughout the community, encouraging parent participation, developing community support, and implementing health policy programming.

## The Department Should Review Its Continued Participation in D.A.R.E.

Given D.A.R.E.'s lack of proven effectiveness, the Department should decide whether it should continue to promote and participate in the program. The Department can obtain expert help in making this decision. DPS is a member of the Arizona Drug and Gang Policy Council, which has a statutory mandate to evaluate the effectiveness of publicly funded prevention programs and to make recommendations for either revising the programs or redirecting funding.

### The Department should:

- ✓ Work with the Arizona Drug and Gang Policy Council to determine whether it should continue its involvement with D.A.R.E.

## To Obtain More Information

- A copy of the full report can be obtained by calling (602) 553-0333 or by visiting our Web site at:
  - [www.auditorgen.state.az.us](http://www.auditorgen.state.az.us)
- The contact person for this report is **Dot Reinhard**.