



TABLE OF CONTENTS:

- Kings County District Attorney's Office (Brooklyn) recently started a program to target and divert cases at arraignment. Turn to page 4 to learn about the remarkable compliance rate of participants in this program.
- Learn about how the San Diego City Attorney's Office is helping homeless veterans and women get back on their feet on page 4
- Turn to page 6 to learn how Chatham County (Savannah, Georgia) continues to engage more of its community members.
- Turn to page 6 to learn about an onsite training by SMEs Dr. Andrew Fox and Julie Wartell for the King County (Seattle) Innovative Prosecution Solutions team



Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney Jean Peters Baker addresses a crowd in advance of a Innovative Prosecution Solutions community clean-up.

Jackson County's Innovative Prosecution Solutions Project: Aligning Geographic Prosecution and Community Involvement

Kate Brubacher is the Project Lead for the Jackson County (Kansas City) Prosecutor's Office's (JCPO) Innovative Prosecution Solutions (IPS) project. The geographic-based project focuses on the East Patrol Division, the most violent area within Kansas City, Missouri. Ms. Brubacher has been a prosecutor with JCPO since October 2016, and was hired specifically to lead JCPO's IPS grant. Her research partners are Dr. Andrew Fox and Dr. Chadley James of California State University, Fresno, whom Ms. Brubacher describes as "insightful, creative, and committed to our goal of stemming gun violence in Kansas City." Before working at JCPO, Ms. Brubacher worked at a law firm in New York City. The Yale University Law graduate was attracted to JCPO as she is "drawn to the larger moral questions in criminal justice as well as the immediate good that can be done for individuals and communities hurt by crime."

Ms. Brubacher credits JCPO Prosecuting Attorney Jean Peters Baker, "who is indefatigable in doing difficult and important work fighting for families and vulnerable communities in Jackson County." JCPO's website describes the importance of community prosecution and its prosecutors' roles in the community, explaining, "Prosecutors have a responsibility to not only focus their attention on processing cases presented to them by police,

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but on crime prevention, problem solving, building partnerships with citizens in the community and incorporating the priorities of citizens into their mission and operations."¹ JCPO's community-driven approach is highlighted by office-wide programs including: the Drug Abatement Response Team (DART), whose mission is to remove criminal activity, repair damaged neighborhoods and restore Kansas City communities; and the Kansas City No Violence Alliance (KC NoVA), where police, probation officers, and other criminal justice professionals work with key law enforcement and city leaders to reduce violence in Kansas City's urban core.

JCPO's IPS project also relies on community engagement to aid in prosecuting violent crime. According to Ms. Brubacher, "we are trying to lower gun violence in the urban core... through application of innovative strategies." To do so, the team has selected five micro hotspots, based on calls for service to law enforcement and filed violent crime reports. Two prosecutors work exclusively on cases arising out of the five hotspots, and are "spending significant time at the police campus which serves the hotspots." Dr. Fox adds that this geographic, vertical prosecution model using social network-based intervention, "helps with efficiency of problem areas and problem people." IPS uses a people-centric approach—targeting crime drivers while engaging and protecting victims and

community members. Dr. Fox explains this approach is something he and Prosecuting Attorney Peters Baker have been exploring for a few years.

The community engagement piece of IPS includes addressing abandoned housing—which can be a ripe ground for criminal activity—in one of the five hotspot locations. So far, the team has conducted a community clean up, completed minor home repairs, and is in the process of clearing titles to abandoned houses so that they can be purchased and rehabilitated. The team is also implementing a Restorative Justice diversion program through a local organization, the Center for Conflict Resolution, to select and train 6-10 community members who will staff Neighborhood Accountability Boards and adjudicate some lower-level crimes in each of the five hotspot communities. The Initiative is also building on victim services, while projecting a larger presence in the community, which Dr. James explains will help empower victims and witnesses, and build more trust between prosecutors, law enforcement and the community.

Dr. Fox explains that selecting the five hotspots from the urban core of Kansas City, a segmented population of almost 85,000 residents in a city of less than 500,000 people, “was fascinating from a research angle.” The hotspot selection process arose out of a partnership with the Kansas City Police Department (KCPD), and Dr. Ken Novak from University of Missouri– Kansas City, who developed the process through a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) SPI (SPI) grant. (Dr. Fox and Dr. Novak are the two co-researchers for the SPI grant). Both SPI and IPS aligned their goals of hotspot selection, starting with 20 potential hotspot sites, and narrowing the list down to five. This process involved prosecutors, law enforcement, and researchers driving to potential hotspots to conduct visual inspections of each potential hotspot. The team ruled out any potential hotspot with hospitals or probation offices, which artificially increased the number of calls for service. After surveying all twenty sites, the team regrouped to work on randomization—a process that researchers, but not usually practitioners, utilize. The meeting helped everyone understand the importance of randomization for data-driven strategies, with one of the police commanders using a table of random numbers to place hotspots into control and treatment groups. Dr. Fox explained this process was “good for buy-in, showing practitioners how to use control areas, measuring responses, and understanding implementation fidelity using randomization since we were all in the same room together. It was pretty fun getting researchers and practitioners together to understand why researchers work with numbers in a certain way, and to hear from law enforcement practitioners about why some neighborhood organizations are more active than others.”

Thus far, the researchers have implemented a research design for both IPS and the Smart Policing program, comprised of the five treatment hotspots, a policing only treatment group, and one control group. The one Smart Policing treatment group consists of hotspot policing without the vertical/geographic prosecution component, and the control group has normal policing and prosecution. For the SPI, hotspot policing involves stationing an officer for six weeks in each of the five hotspots during certain peak crime times (usually at night and/or the weekend). The officer spends approximately fifteen minutes at the hotspot, “the right amount of time before diminishing returns set in,” according to Dr. Fox.

The researchers are currently working on the process evaluation, identifying and directing appropriate cases to the Initiative’s two prosecutors. As the Initiative progresses, the researchers will conduct data analysis, comparing the treatment group with the control group. Metrics will include: different prosecution outcomes

and conviction rates, length of time to prosecute the case up to disposition, effective alternatives to traditional prosecution, and whether witnesses and victims are more likely to participate in the prosecutorial process.

So far, Dr. Fox explains that as a researcher working with practitioners, one challenge is finding buy-in from potential supporters. “Generally, some practitioners find new ideas to be a waste of time; they think they are already doing things the best they can be done... You have to find the right people willing to try something new and test the results.” To combat initial wariness, Dr. Fox says finding innovative people and showing them research at the onset of the project is critical. “It’s easier to get people onboard once you can show them evidence of case processing under older and newer systems. It’s hard to argue with data.” Dr. Fox adds that the JCPO and its team exemplify an innovative spirit and welcome evidence-based strategies to improve reducing violent crime in their jurisdiction.

In addition to the researchers and JCPO Prosecutor Jean Peters Baker, Ms. Brubacher also credits the efforts of the Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) and its SPI. According to Ms. Brubacher, JCPO and KCPD’s “efforts are closely aligned.” She elaborates, “We have spent time going door-to-door with a community police officer, and discussing ways that all of our resources can be better deployed to target the sources of crimes, and improve the neighborhood for the families who make their homes there.”

The team also works on innovative ways to deal with victims’ fear of retaliation and addressing the community’s lack of confidence in the criminal justice system. Dr. Fox explains that fears of retaliation are well-founded when cases take long to prosecute, case outcomes are uncertain, and when suspects who commit violent crimes aren’t held on bail. “There’s a lot on the line for victims and witnesses to participate in [the criminal justice process] and their fears are real and justified. People who testify against suspects get retaliated against, and there aren’t enough state-level resources available to protect them. We have to do everything we can to protect victims and witnesses.” IPS is working to allay these concerns. Ms. Brubacher explains it is imperative to take the needs of victims and witnesses seriously, not only to assist in serving justice, but also to assist in helping the victim to recover and return to functioning as close to normal as possible. According to Ms. Brubacher, “we try to protect individuals at the time of trial in partnership with the police,” by asking police to watch a house or area, or moving victims and witnesses during trial. Ms. Brubacher also explains JCPO makes prosecuting witness tampering a priority by charging witness tampering cases and making sure individuals know that they will be charged if they tamper with witnesses. She adds, “When attorneys are made aware that there are potential threats towards victims and witnesses, we carefully monitor jail calls as well.”

Ms. Brubacher admits that the criminal justice system “has failed to benefit certain communities. We are aware of this every day, and it is our goal to rebuild trust and legitimacy.” Ms. Brubacher explains that the [IPS] grant helps address this issue. “Despite some deep divides that still exist between communities and law enforcement, there are engaged citizens living in violent-ridden areas who are willing to work with us if we uphold our end of the bargain. Part of the reason we are excited about our [IPS] grant is because it gives us the resources to focus on these communities that are so deserving of our attention.”

“Community Outreach: Partnering with the Community” Accessed August 28, 2017 from: <http://www.jacksoncountyprowsecutor.com/159/Neighborhood-Prosecution>

SITE ACTIVITY

FY '14 Sites

HARRIS COUNTY (HOUSTON)

PROJECT: *SURVIVORS ACQUIRING FREEDOM AND EMPOWERMENT (SAFE) COURT*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The SAFE Court program utilizes supervised, targeted intervention, and treatment designed upon a therapeutic-based model for young adults between the ages of 17 and 25 years old, charged with misdemeanor prostitution. Safe Court meets twice monthly.

WEEKLY NEWS:

Why Does Houston Have a Curfew? Flooding Isn't the Only Thing That Poses a Threat...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

LOS ANGELES

PROJECT: *INTRODUCING NEW TOOLS USING EVIDENCE AND RISK ASSESSMENT TO CONFIRM ELIGIBILITY FOR PROSECUTION TREATMENT (INTERCEPT)*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The Los Angeles City Attorney's Office continues utilizing best practices and evidence-based tools to successfully develop better-informed engagement plans for pre-filing restorative justice diversion participants. Each participant's obligations are based on their own unique history and needs.

Six Administrative Coordinators support the city-wide Neighborhood Justice Program (NJP) for eligible program participants (INTERCEPT is a part of NJP, and four LAPD divisions are within INTERCEPT project area.) NJP continues to expand its reach and increase productivity: NJP recently launched its 12th Neighborhood Justice Panel for program participants; from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017, NJP diversion cases initiated (city-wide) increased 40%; from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017 NJP diversion cases resolved (city-wide) increased 55%.

WEEKLY NEWS:

Violent Crime is Down on Venice Beach...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

COOK COUNTY (CHICAGO)

PROJECT: *MISDEMEANOR DEFERRED ENHANCEMENT PROSECUTION PROJECT (MDEPP)*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

BJA funded the Cook County State's Attorney's Office IPS project, MDPEP, to defer defendants, charged with non-violent misdemeanor offenses, from prosecution, and utilize a risk and needs assessment for appropriate referrals to treatment and other resources for case dismissal upon successful program completion.

WEEKLY NEWS:

110 Guns, Assault Rifles Recovered By Police During Labor Day Weekend...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

SAN FRANCISCO

PROJECT: *CRIME STRATEGIES UNIT (CSU)*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The CSU promotes predictive analytics for strategic prosecution, using analytic tools to make connections between criminal events, defendants, witnesses, and victims to facilitate more effective investigations, charging decisions, and case dispositions.

WEEKLY NEWS:

San Francisco Police Shifting Tactics to Prevent Crime
...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

FY '15 Sites

ST. LOUIS

PROJECT: *YOUNG ADULT FELONY OFFENDER DIVERSION PROGRAM*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office is developing a Prosecutor-led Young Adult Felony Offender Diversion Program, offering first and near first-time, non-violent felony offenders, ages 17-25 years old, the ability to participate in a comprehensive program, which includes robust supervision and services referral component, in lieu of traditional court processing. Stakeholders—such as prosecutors, the defense bar, and law enforcement— will identify potential participants. The Initiative will afford opportunities for program participants to: (1) obtain future employment, (2) pursue educational and vocational prospects, (3) provide a means to prevent future recidivism, and (4) become a law-abiding citizen.

WEEKLY NEWS:

New Missouri high school will help teens struggling with addiction avoid temptations...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

BALTIMORE

PROJECT: *IMPLEMENTING EVIDENCE-BASED RISK ASSESSMENT DURING THE PRETRIAL PHASE*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The site continues to develop an automated risk assessment for charging prosecutors to determine appropriate release or hold recommendations for the Bail Commission and Court. The State's Attorney's Office, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), and research partners are collaborating to develop a uniform risk assessment to be used by both agencies. Throughout the spring and summer, the team has been meeting with officials at DPSCS to discuss pretrial risk assessment for use by the State's Attorney's Office and Pretrial Services.

The team continues working on stakeholder buy-in from the community, attending monthly community meetings. During the last meeting, on August 22, the team informed the community about the pre-trial risk assessment. During upcoming community

meetings, the team will distribute handouts that will summarize the Initiative, explain the program's impact to the general public, and ways community members can get involved in the program.

The team continues meeting with Circuit Court judges and bail commissioners to educate the judiciary about the Initiative and strengthen positive buy-in.

The site continues to collaborate with DPSCS for data sharing. The Research Partner, Applied Research Services (ARS) is collaborating with DPSCS' research partner to determine predictive factors to be used for the risk assessment. ARS expects to finalize data and analyses by September.

WEEKLY NEWS:

'Policing Inside Out' Course Helps Police Build Relationship with The Public...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

KINGS COUNTY (BROOKLYN)

PROJECT: *THE BROOKLYN YOUNG ADULT JUSTICE INITIATIVE*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

As of August 15, the site reports 1,737 open cases pending in the Adolescent Diversion Court Part, and 230 open cases in KCDA's specialized unit. BYAC offers diversion instead of prosecution for young adults, 16-24 years old, charged with misdemeanor offenses, who are at the greatest risk for re-offending and/or are facing more serious criminal consequences.

The site credits case reduction with ongoing training designed to target and divert cases at arraignment— and not later in the criminal justice process. The site reports more defendants are taking pleas at arraignment (as part of its program expansion) and complying with Brooklyn Justice Initiatives (BJI) while taking advantage of BJI services. BJI provides treatment service referrals to program participants, and new participants proceed directly to BJI's courthouse-based office to sign up for services at arraignment. Since the beginning of this Initiative in April 2017, there has been a 75% compliance rate: 98 participants are compliant, 68 of which were compliant by the first court adjournment, and 5 by the second adjournment. The site is "proud" of this "amazing" experience.

The site reports that the defense bar has increased buy-in and the next stakeholder meeting is September 14 with judge, defense bar, and BJI.

From June 26-August 15, the site has handed out 17 gift cards to encourage voluntary participant compliance with the Procedural Justice Program Participant Survey. The site expects to distribute more gift cards as the program moves forward.

WEEKLY NEWS:

Brooklyn's DA race has been about reform and progressive credentials...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

SAN DIEGO

PROJECT: *THE COMMUNITY JUSTICE INITIATIVE (CJI)*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

CJI uses data and evidence-based practices to restore justice and increase effectiveness and efficiency through a post-plea, city-wide diversion Initiative to provide accountability, early intervention, and swift consequences for participants charged with eligible misdemeanor offenses.

As of August 23, the site reports that: 4,013 offers made; 2,698 offers accepted; 1,293 offers rejected; 2,083 offers completed; and 483 participants failed out of the program. These numbers reflect enrollment since November 2016.

The site reports that both its partners — the Alpha Project and Urban Corps will sustain the program after the IPS grant funding ends. Alpha Projected hosted a Community Engagement Advisory Board meeting on August 25, and attendees toured Alpha Project, attended a discussion, and learned about a short video the site is creating to inform the community about CJI. The site envisions the video will feature a successful participant and a community member. The site expects to use the video on its website and at the court kiosks, technology permitting.

The San Diego City Attorney's Office launched its San Diego Misdemeanants At-Risk Track (SMART) Program on December 1, 2016 (unaffiliated with IPS). Due to increased grant funding, the program will provide in-house recovery treatment for 80 individuals per year (up from 10 individuals when it began in December 2016). The city of San Diego recently agreed to purchase a 42-room hotel for housing expansion. The site reports SMART is running "really well" and is full of "good successes" including placing veterans in permanent housing and helping homeless women build confidence, self-esteem, and other skills through the "Leap to Success" program. The site reports graduation occurs every quarter, with the next graduation occurring in October—with 1 or 2 IPS participants expected to graduate.

The site's researchers at the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) completed a 10-member focus group with stakeholders (including members of Urban Corps and the Alpha Project) the week of July 24. The researchers received "a wealth of information" and a lot of participation, including information about what's worked, challenges, what other sites could use to replicate a program similar to CJI.

WEEKLY NEWS:

Gov. Brown addresses jobs for convicts at San Diego Employer Forum...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

FY '16 Sites

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

PROJECT: *USING OUR BRAINS: REDUCING RECIDIVISM AMONG YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The site is furthering collaboration with the DC US Attorney's Office (USAO). Both offices plan to develop a diversion-based Initiative, using restorative justice, for youth (ages 12-17) and young adults (ages 18-24) who commit certain crimes, such as theft, destruction of property and non-injury simple assault cases with victim consent. The site has begun diverting juvenile cases into Restorative Justice panels instead of traditional prosecution, and is evaluating USAO data for program development.

There have been 34 total cases referred so far in the OAG's program. Of the cases that reached the conference phase, all but one has resulted in a consensus agreement between the parties to rectify the wrongdoing. Every one of these agreements has either been successfully completed by the responsible juvenile, or is currently pending completion.

As of August 31, 2017, the site reports approximately 12 open cases referred by juvenile prosecutors, and 2 open community dialogues referred by community members and local Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) elected officials.

The OAG and its research partners at CCI continue to evaluate data to determine suitable candidates for potential diversion.

WEEKLY NEWS:

Rocketship Academy Prospers in Crime-ridden D.C. Neighborhood...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

JACKSON COUNTY (KANSAS CITY)

PROJECT: *JACKSON COUNTY MISSOURI PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE INNOVATIVE PROSECUTION SOLUTIONS PROJECT*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The geographic-based Initiative focuses on five hot spots in the East Patrol Division, the most violent area within Kansas City, Missouri. Team members collaborate with law enforcement, community partnership specialists, and community members to assess crime-related problems in the five hot spots and implement strategies to address them.

On August 15, the Kansas City Police Department welcomed its new Police Chief, Rick Smith.

The site is busy enlarging victim services and fostering community Initiatives, and is working closely with Kansas City Police Department's community officer. The team is planning to host community events in every hotspot, such as "door knocks" for community building. On September 15, the site hosted a back-to-school screening of the movie "Zootopia" in one of its hot spot neighborhoods. The site also continues working on its Abandoned Housing Project and is contacting Legal Aid about housing rehabilitation and demolition of problem, vacated structures. The site has also chosen a Restorative Justice facilitator to select and

train 6-10 community members who will staff Neighborhood Accountability Boards and adjudicate some lower-level crimes in each of the five hot spot communities.

The site and its researchers at California State-Fresno continue working on selecting violent crime cases for vertical and geographic-based prosecution from the five hot spot locations.

WEEKLY NEWS:

KCPD investigates series of shootings on major roadways...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

ESSEX COUNTY (NEWARK)

PROJECT: *ESSEX COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVE*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

A specialized unit has been developed to investigate and prosecute cases based on suspects' usage of social media. The site envisions a systematic, proactive approach to social-media mining that will reduce crime, empower victims, promote fair and impartial justice, and instill the public's confidence in criminal justice. The site targets violent crimes with a firearm component.

The site continues screening about 3-6 potential cases per week, and reports that most cases have a social media connection as many witnesses identify defendants through social media. Acting Essex County Prosecutor and site lead Robert Laurino reports "there's a good amount of manageable cases" to investigate and prosecute and the Initiative is "progressing very well." The site recently added a new prosecutor, Alex Ablu, to the Initiative.

The site has begun working with the ECPO Juvenile Crimes Unit to use social media to investigate juvenile cases. Mr. Laurino said by investigating a case using social media, ECPO was able to "stop a juvenile gang in its tracks and stopped a lot of juvenile gang networks this summer." The team is working with ECPO's Director of Juvenile Crimes to assist with juvenile case dispositions especially since many juvenile cases are connected to other cases within the Initiative.

The site's researchers at Rutgers University report approximately 80+ treatment cases so far, and have identified other additional cases that will likely populate the 3 control groups. The researchers will begin sorting these cases within the next couple weeks

WEEKLY NEWS:

Manhunts Underway After Murders in Newark, Atlantic City...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

CHATHAM COUNTY (SAVANNAH)

PROJECT: *THE CHATHAM COUNTY INNOVATIVE PROSECUTION SOLUTIONS PROGRAM*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The Initiative aims to reduce gun, local group, and gang violence by focusing on: identifying and targeting a geographic hotspot for gun violence in the Savannah area and most violent offenders within it; tracking and prioritizing prosecution and individuals within the hotspot; diverting non-essential cases (e.g. theft and simple drug possession) to alternative programs; and engaging with community groups within the hotspot through meetings, social media forums, and other outreach strategies.

As of July 24, there are 25 active cases in the target zone area, including both new charges and probation violations.

The site continues its work with engaging community members, by attending neighborhood association meetings. The site continues to meet with community leaders, touring the hotspot and discussing ways to get young men involved in the community. The "End Gun Violence Program" Director is also assisting with community engagement efforts.

The site's researchers at Georgia Southern University are receiving data from the site and working on Social Network Analysis and Spatial Analysis.

WEEKLY NEWS:

Teen shootings stain Savannah's renown for Southern charm...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

MIAMI

PROJECT: *THE GUN VIOLENCE REDUCTION INITIATIVE*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The Gun Violence Reduction Initiative places a team of prosecutors, investigators, and a community outreach and victim witness specialist to work directly with police and the community to combat shootings and homicides at the Northside District Station. The Initiative's four goals include: 1) prosecute and convict individuals involved in gun/gang related crimes to reduce crime and victimization in the Northside District; 2) rely on data-driven methods to proactively identify gang members and chronic offenders; 3) analyze data from law enforcement agencies and use geographic information systems (GIS) to target hotspots and crime generators in the Northside District; and 4) work with the community to dispel the "anti-snitch" mentality.

WEEKLY NEWS:

Miami-Dade Drug Probe 'Still Misbehavin' Bags 4 More...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

FY '16 3PI Site

KING COUNTY (SEATTLE)

PROJECT: *SHOTS FIRED*

SITE HIGHLIGHTS:

The team continues its work to establish a Crime Strategies Unit (CSU) for its "Shots Fired" Initiative aimed at addressing increased firearm violence in the jurisdiction, through institutionalizing standardized intelligence gathering and sharing to concentrate resources on reducing shots-fired incidents and identifying those involving chronic victims and offenders in hotspot locations. The site's Shots Fired database is now using its growing, easier-to-use Access platform, with eight agencies contributing to the database. The database allows prosecutors and related agencies to see what is happening in real time and to directly contact detectives about any new crime developments. The team expects to hire four college interns for the fall semester to assist with the database and review instant reports on NIBIN hits.

The site continues participating in a NIBIN working group that meets to discuss investigations.

The site's researchers at California State- Fresno began qualitative interviews for stakeholders this summer.

On August 2-4, the King County CSU team and local law enforcement crime analysts attended a training by Crime Analyst Julie Wartell and Researcher Dr. Fox. The training covered: The Shots Fired Database Review; crime mapping techniques and geographic information systems (GIS); review of social networking analysis (SNA), SNA Initiatives and data collection so far in King County; and other components of running an effective CSU.

WEEKLY NEWS:

110 arrested in Bellevue prostitution sting set up 'to fill void' after Asian brothels shut down...[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)