

May 1, 2024



Sacramento County Sheriff's Office
BSCC ORT Prevention Grant Project
Local Evaluation Plan

Project Period: October 1, 2023 - December 31, 2026

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Background

Project Need

Sacramento County, California is home to over 1.5 million individuals and encompasses just shy of 1,000 square miles. Its largest city, Sacramento, is California's state capital and has over 500,000 people. While many areas are highly urban, the county also contains a portion of California's Central Valley, known for its agricultural productivity.

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Office (SSO) serves the unincorporated county and provides contract policing to cities such as Rancho Cordova and Isleton. The SSO provides patrol services, runs correctional facilities, and manages a work release program. In addition to these services, the agency performs several other functions, such as providing security for the airport and courts as well as fulfilling civil duties. Due to the county's geography and population, the SSO must be equipped to serve this highly diverse region, including policing urban and rural areas.

Sacramento County has experienced significant problems related to Organized Retail Theft (ORT). Since 2018, it has consistently been among the top 10 metropolitan locations in the United States impacted by ORT. In a 2023 report by the National Retail Federation and the Loss Prevention Research Council, Sacramento ranked 7th in the nation in terms of the impact of ORT on its retailers' operating environment.

In response to these trends, the SSO engaged local retailers identifying several locations that had suffered theft-related losses in the hundreds of thousands of dollars annually and multiple businesses that reported losses of over \$1 million in 2021 and 2022. In many locations, losses had increased from 2021 to 2022, and one location experienced over \$6 million in losses between 2021 and 2022. While these losses are significant, the SSO Property Crimes Unit believes the financial impact is likely higher as retail theft is under-reported.

Like most law enforcement agencies across the United States, the SSO has experienced several challenges in addressing ORT. California's Prop 47 and Prop 57 have hindered progress in addressing ORT crimes as these laws increased the threshold for charging these crimes as misdemeanors versus felonies and limit the use of custodial arrests. Such changes require the agency to develop new tactics. ORT suspects have also evolved and are developing new strategies of their own. One emergent and dangerous tactic has been using fires, set as diversions, to allow ORT offenders to steal property and quickly exit the store. ORT is negatively impacting Sacramento County from a fiscal and public safety perspective.

Additionally, the SSO has had to address staffing challenges. As of late 2023, the agency had 67 vacant officer positions (nearly nine percent of total sworn officers) and an even higher percentage of vacancies in some support positions, such as dispatchers. Although the SSO has been adopting new technologies and shifting call response efforts, lack of personnel has impacted the agency's ability to respond to emerging crimes.

Despite staffing challenges, the SSO maintains a Property Crime Unit to address these incidents. The unit conducts investigations and, before staffing issues arose, assisted loss prevention managers with cite and release training. This training improved report writing and stressed the importance of reporting retail theft. The unit also provided tools, such as checklists, that assisted loss prevention agents in appropriately processing individuals detained for retail theft.

The Property Crimes Unit feels collaboration among law enforcement, loss prevention staff, local business owners, and managers is essential in combating ORT. They have maintained relationships with major retailers but believe additional partnerships can improve reporting and responses to this issue.

ORT (and retail theft more generally) harms the community SSO serves. To address this, the SSO plans to implement a multipronged strategy aimed at increasing community and business awareness/education related to ORT while simultaneously using a combination of enforcement and deterrence to decrease ORT crimes.

Project Overview

With funding from the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), the SSO will implement a comprehensive crime prevention, enforcement, and deterrence program to reduce ORT. This initiative incorporates various activities, services, and interventions to reduce these crimes and enhance community safety. The planned strategies described below include (1) increasing public awareness, including educating loss prevention staff and (2) increasing enforcement efforts to demonstrate that ORT has consequences and deter offenders.

1. Increase Public and Business Awareness/Education related to ORT

Increase Public Awareness

Increased public awareness of the harm caused by ORT crimes will be accomplished through social media, traditional media, and community outreach. These efforts may include billboards highlighting ORT-related issues and efforts being taken to address this issue. Printed and online crime prevention information will raise awareness and inform the public about steps they can take to help reduce ORT. Finally, community outreach on the topic will occur as a part of the SSO's ongoing community policing efforts.

Increase Retailer Knowledge

The SSO will educate retailers to increase reporting of ORT, help stores recognize and prevent ORT offenses, and improve retailers' ability to address ORT in cooperation with and independent of the police.

- *Cite and Release Training:* The SSO's Property Crime Unit will develop a cite and release training for retail loss prevention agents (i.e., in-store security) using a "train-the-trainer" model. This training will be similar to a prior training delivered by SSO that emphasized the importance of reporting and training loss prevention agents on how best to document ORT. Loss prevention agents will also be provided tools, such as

- checklists, to improve retailers' ability to report and address ORT crime independent of police efforts and assist law enforcement when cases warrant prosecution or follow-up.
- *General Training/Education:* The SSO will utilize crime prevention information and potentially other methods to encourage retailers to increase reporting related to retail theft, specifically ORT. These efforts will also help retail staff identify potential ORT, improve their responses, and assist law enforcement. These efforts may include the formation of an Organized Retail Theft Task Force working group aimed at increasing awareness and improving outreach and collaboration.

Improved education and awareness may initially increase ORT and retail theft reporting as businesses and the public become more focused on the problem. However, as businesses focus more on the issue and the SSO's efforts to address this issue become more widely known, ORT and retail theft should eventually decrease.

2. Engage in Enforcement and Leverage Deterrence

Joint ORT Operations

The SSO partners with retailers, particularly those locations suffering significant losses, to conduct enforcement operations. SSO is publicizing these efforts to ensure potential ORT offenders are aware of the increased risk of apprehension (see deterrence below). These efforts ensure offenders know the consequences of being held accountable as well as improve collaboration and communication between retailers and law enforcement. These efforts will buttress the public awareness campaign and ensure potential ORT offenders become aware that law enforcement is addressing this issue.

Improved Staffing/Training

While necessary for all portions of this proposal, increased staffing focused on ORT will significantly improve the SSO's ability to respond to ORT. Staffing includes a mixture of dedicated full-time, part-time on-call, and overtime. Full-time and part-time on-call staff include detectives who have the support resources necessary to investigate ORT. This is especially important as ORT is much more complex than most other forms of larceny and requires specialized knowledge. Staffing also includes support staff, such as records personnel, to help develop systems to better capture when and how ORT occurs. This will aid the agency in developing its strategic response to this issue. Finally, overtime is being allotted to allow for interventions such as joint operations at high-risk locations or to conduct more extensive investigations.

The SSO has also budgeted for specialized ORT training to increase the knowledge of dedicated ORT staff, improve their investigations, and ensure they remain abreast of best practices in investigating and preventing ORT. Training will also be offered to line-level staff via various mechanisms (i.e., training officers during briefing, training officers returning to patrol, etc.).

Improved Technology

The SSO intends to leverage the following technology to improve its response to ORT:

- *Drone Technology:* The SSO used grant monies to purchase drones. The agency has used this technology to assist in ORT missions.

ORT Prevention Grant Program

- *Surveillance Cameras*: The SSO has acquired several mobile surveillance systems that can be moved to different locations based on operational needs. These cameras, in combination with drones, will be used to monitor and track the incidence of retail and organized retail theft. They will also serve as a visible deterrent to would-be criminals.
- *Flock*: The agency has purchased a Flock camera system that deploys hardware and software for systems such as Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) cameras, license plate reader cameras, gunshot detection systems, etc. This software can support investigations or a real-time information center (RTIC).
- *RTIC/Integration/Networking Software*: The SSO has acquired Auror and Fusus subscription software. Auror is cloud-based software that allows information sharing, case management, and other collaboration between law enforcement and retail businesses. Auror helps SSO coordinate investigations and improve communication. Fusus is cloud-based software often used in RTICs, that integrates video feeds and other information sources. The SSO has integrated this software into existing surveillance systems.
- *Investigative Tools*: The SSO has purchased systems to improve their investigations. This includes Cobwebs, an open-source intelligence tool for web-based investigations; Clearview's image and facial recognition software; Cellebrite, a tool for forensic investigations of mobile devices, and Graykey, also a tool for forensic investigations of mobile devices.

The SSO believes a potential weakness of current efforts to deter ORT is a perception among offenders that these crimes are not addressed. Increasing enforcement efforts should improve other strategies aimed at deterring offenders. This is particularly true when the enforcement efforts mentioned above are combined with the goal of increased public awareness. Together, these strategies will support the SSO's final strategy of deterrence.

Deterrence

The ultimate value of many of the above-mentioned efforts is expected to manifest in an increased ability to deter ORT. The SSO intends to use its public awareness campaign and enhanced enforcement to increase potential ORT offenders' perception that they will be held accountable for their offenses. These efforts will include collaborating with the District Attorney's Office, community members, businesses, and other local stakeholders. Without repeating the specific tactics mentioned above, deterrence will be accomplished via:

- *Increased awareness of the harm associated with ORT.*
- *Improved crime prevention practices.*
- *Adoption of best practices by at-risk retailers.*
- *Increased awareness of law enforcement efforts to hold ORT offenders accountable.*
- *Increased awareness of prosecutions against specific groups engaging in ORT.*

The SSO hopes to leverage deterrence as a means of reducing the appeal of ORT. This should reduce the overall number of ORT offenders and, over time, the number of ORT incidents.

Target Area

SSO's comprehensive public awareness, enforcement, and deterrence program activities include strategies that impact Sacramento County as a whole. However, the program will initially emphasize locations suffering exceptionally high losses. These efforts will also include the City of Rancho Cordova, whose chief also serves as a Commander with the SSO.

Goals and Objectives

The SSO has established one goal and three objectives for the project:

Goal 1: Raise Awareness of Organized Retail Theft and implement strategies to create awareness, deter, enforce, prevent, and respond to ORT.

- **Objective 1:** Increase the number of arrests for ORT and/or retail theft by at least 20% relative to the baseline (a previous 12-month period) number of arrests established on 10/01/2023.
- **Objective 2:** Implement a strategic outreach and awareness initiative aimed at the public, law enforcement, and retailers in Sacramento County.
- **Objective 3:** Train eighty (80) or more loss prevention managers to increase their knowledge and ability to identify, prevent, deter and/or respond to ORT resulting in consistent ORT reporting among participating retailers.

Logic Model

Inputs

Funding
BSCC ORT Prevention Grant Award

People
Staffing:
Law Enforcement Personnel: 2 full-time detectives, 2 part-time on-call deputies (detectives), 1 Records Office, Overtime pay, Property Crime Unit Sergeant, Division Lieutenant, Division Captain, Crime Analyst, ORT Project Coordinator
External Partners: Local retailers, Rancho Cordova Police Department, EVALCORP

Tools
Law Enforcement Technology: 5 Drones and tracker service, FLOCK surveillance cameras and other software/hardware systems, 4 investigative laptops, 4 investigative cellphones/service, 4 WIFI hotspots/yr, 4 mobile printers, 4 Surveillance Camera Systems, 4 binoculars/night vision, supporting software for technology, 19 tracking devices, 1 trailer to transport equipment, forensic software
Office supplies and equipment
Training Materials and Programs: for retail partners and law enforcement personnel.
Community engagement tools: for public education campaigns

Activities

Support Targeted Enforcement Operations: Increase investigations of ORT incidents and execute blitz operations

Partnerships: Continue partnership with Rancho Cordova Police Department, establish partnership with Container Store and other local retailers; extend collaboration and coordination to District Attorney Offices

Retailer Training Program: Educate retail loss prevention managers on theft prevention through a train-the-trainer model

Law Enforcement Training: Training encompasses ORT best practices including response tactics and reporting

Public Education Campaign: Use social media postings, public service announcements, YouTube educational videos, email blasts, billboards, and community meetings to increase awareness about ORT and theft prevention

Adopt Advanced Investigative Technologies: Procure and implement video surveillance, trackers and forensic software

Local Retailer and Community meetings: Continue regular meetings with retailers, loss prevention personnel, and the community about crime trends and theft prevention tactics

Outputs

Stolen property recovered during grant-funded operations

Number of retailer reports submitted to the Sheriff's Office

Number of loss prevention managers trained

Number of loss prevention staff trained by managers

Loss prevention personnel knowledge of ORT prevention strategies and reporting

Number of training sessions law enforcement personnel completed

Number of law enforcement personnel trained

Number of ORT investigations aided by project technology

Number of grant-funded media shared related to ORT per year

Number of community meetings and educational classes held

Community perception and awareness of ORT

Number of retailer partnerships established

Number of regional ORT meetings attended

Outcomes

- Decreased crime related to ORT
- Increased responses to ORT incidents
- Improved investigative success and increased number of arrests for theft-related crimes
- Increased participation from loss prevention personnel in training sessions leading to increased knowledge and skill-building in effective retail theft prevention strategies and reporting
- Increased public awareness regarding ORT
- Enhanced knowledge and skills for law enforcement personnel in preventing and responding to ORT crimes
- Improved external communications and collaboration with retailer and other law enforcement agencies related to ORT

Impacts

- Safer Community Environment:** Reduction in ORT contributes to safer environments for businesses and residents of Sacramento County.
- Strengthened Law Enforcement Capabilities:** Enhanced investigative tools, strategies, and training improve long-term crime prevention and response effectiveness.
- Increased Public Confidence:** Enhanced public confidence in law enforcement's ability to protect the community and deter ORT crime.

Evaluation Method and Design

The County of Sacramento has contracted with EVALCORP to conduct a comprehensive process and outcome evaluation of the project. Both components are described together in this section.

Framework

Evaluation Goals

The goals for the proposed evaluation are to (1) document the implementation of the project and the extent to which proposed activities were completed as intended (i.e., the process evaluation); (2) measure the degree to which the goals and objectives were achieved (i.e., the outcome evaluation); and (3) identify successes, challenges, and lessons learned. The last objective will help ensure lessons from the project can be utilized to inform future initiatives.

Approach

A mixed-methods evaluation approach consisting of qualitative and quantitative data collection activities will be implemented to assess the process and outcome measures established for the SSO's ORT program.

The planned robust evaluation will use multiple data collection approaches and sources to assess the impact of the work carried out as part of this grant. Specific strategies that will be used include:

- A pre/post comparison methodology will contrast baseline data collected before project activities with data collected during implementation to determine the ORT prevention program's overall effectiveness on the project outcomes.
- Cumulative change on identified process and outcome metrics will be assessed regularly to (1) track ongoing project implementation and outcomes, and (2) allow for any necessary changes to strategies as the grant-funded initiative rolls out. This is key to a formative evaluation and involves compiling and reviewing ORT evaluation metrics consistently.
- The evaluation will integrate qualitative approaches to enhance and supplement quantitative data. For example, key project staff will be interviewed at the end of the project period to identify the extent to which the activities were implemented as planned, along with challenges and unforeseen events that impacted implementation and/or related outcomes. The evaluation will utilize stakeholder interviews, observations, and success stories to inform the Local Evaluation Report (LER), providing important context, lessons learned, and insights.

Coordination and Oversight

The Sacramento County Project Director is Captain Dustin Silva; he will provide strategic guidance and oversight for the project. Lieutenant Juan Hidalgo will oversee the day-to-day operations. Elaine Braden (assisted by other SSO staff) will manage data collection and monitoring activities.

Evaluation-related decisions will be made collaboratively by the SSO team, with consultation by EVALCORP when appropriate. Any changes requiring BSCC approval will be forwarded to the appropriate party prior to implementation.

EVALCORP will work collaboratively with SSO personnel to ensure the appropriate data collection methodologies, tools, and protocols are developed and implemented. The evaluation team will foster open communication with project personnel to ensure evaluation findings are communicated on a periodic basis and that high-quality, consistent data collection practices are employed. Meetings between the SSO and EVALCORP will occur quarterly, or as needed, to ensure opportunities to address issues and discuss successes as they arise. Data collection concerns will be coordinated between the EVALCORP team and SSO personnel.

Evaluation Tools

Data collection tools and processes will track and monitor the project's activities. Primary data collection tools have been developed to collect information specific to grant activities and secondary data (i.e., data already collected for another use) will be used, when possible, to reduce the burden on staff.

Primary Data Collection Tools

- **ORT Operations Tracking Log:** The ORT Operations Tracking Log will be used to track incidents, arrests, staff assignments, use of equipment, and stolen property recovered related to ORT.
- **Community Survey:** The Community Survey will be administered to Sacramento County community members via social media. Relevant metrics include community perception and awareness of ORT, public safety, and the impact of ORT.
- **Retailer Training Survey:** The Retailer Training Survey will be administered to individuals attending the retail partner training sessions provided by SSO. Relevant metrics include attendees' knowledge of prevention strategies and how to document and retain evidence.
- **Training Tracking Logs:** The Training Tracking Logs will be used to track training sessions and attendees related to retailer and law enforcement training activities.
- **Community Events Tracking Log:** The Community Events Tracking Log will track community outreach to increase public awareness as well as SSO attendance at regional retailer meetings.

Secondary Data Sources

- **Law Enforcement Data:** SSO's Record Management System (RMS) and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System will be used to assess calls, incidents, arrests, and referrals related to ORT.
- **Payroll Records:** To determine the number of FTE staff assigned to various grant activities (e.g., blitz operations, training opportunities) payroll records will be used.
- **Administrative Records:** To document the various equipment purchased and tools implemented (e.g., license plate readers), partnerships established, attendance at collaborative meetings, and other metrics as needed.

- **Public Information Office Records:** The public information office (PIO) will maintain data on media outreach related to ORT.

The evaluation team will collaborate with SSO personnel to ensure all requisite data are obtained, maintained, and reviewed for accuracy/validity regularly.

Data Analysis

Project data will be obtained and reviewed quarterly and annually to ensure accurate and consistent data entry (frequency depends on the specific metric). Data will be aggregated and validated before conducting all required quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis will include data collected via open-ended survey items and key stakeholder interviews. Data will be coded, categorized, and interpreted to identify key themes. This information may be quantified as a part of this process. The overarching goal of these analyses is to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the grant activities and perspectives on the extent to which the project is carried out as planned, including what challenges, if any, were experienced and the strategies used to overcome them.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data will be analyzed using Excel, R, or SPSS analytic software. Descriptive statistics will be run to characterize incidents, arrests, agencies engaged, retailers trained, and other relevant indicators. As appropriate, crosstabs and inferential statistics (e.g., chi-square, t-tests) will be conducted to support descriptive findings and ensure data are interpreted appropriately.

Reporting

The following is a list of anticipated reports and/or presentations EVALCORP will be responsible for or aid in developing:

- **Quarterly Progress Reports:** EVALCORP will support the SSO in developing the BSCC Quarterly Progress Reports.
- **Final Local Evaluation Report:** EVALCORP will develop a Final Local Evaluation Report summarizing the 3-year grant activity and the extent to which the goals and measurable objectives were achieved. This report will be submitted to the BSCC by June 1, 2027.
- **Annual Brief:** In addition to the two mandated reporting requirements described above, EVALCORP will develop a summary outlining progress toward the grant's goals and objectives on an annual basis (i.e., end of calendar year).

In addition to ongoing grant meetings, these periodic reporting events allow grant personnel a formal process by which to monitor progress toward objectives and adjust activities as needed.

Evaluation Metrics

A series of process and outcome metrics (described below) will be monitored for the evaluation of project activities.

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation will document and measure the degree to which grant activities were implemented as intended. The planned process metrics to be tracked for the evaluation of project activities include:

- Number of formal partnerships established
- Number of operations related to ORT completed
- Number of FTE staff assigned to ORT
- Number and type of equipment that was purchased using grant funds and put into operation
- Number of retailer reports submitted to the Sheriff's Office
- Number of training sessions completed with loss prevention managers
- Number of loss prevention managers trained
- Number of loss prevention staff trained by managers
- Number of training sessions completed with law enforcement personnel
- Number of law enforcement personnel trained
- Number of grant-funded media shared related to ORT per year
- Number of community meetings and educational classes held
- Number of retailer partnerships established
- Number of regional ORT meetings attended
- Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Outcome Evaluation

The overarching purpose of the outcome evaluation is to assess the extent to which the project successfully achieved its established goal (see page 8). Planned outcome evaluation metrics for the project are:

- Number of ORT incidents reported, including change over time
- Number of arrests related to ORT
- Number of referrals to the District Attorney's office related to ORT
- Value of stolen property recovered during grant-funded operations
- Loss prevention personnel knowledge of effective theft prevention strategies and reporting
- Number of ORT investigations aided by project technology
- Community perception and awareness of ORT

Data Collection Matrix

An SSO ORT Data Collection Matrix was developed (see Appendix A) to support accurate and consistent evaluation metrics tracking throughout the grant term. The matrix includes a list of metrics to be tracked, where the data will be pulled from (i.e., data source), the metric type (i.e., process vs. outcome), and how each relates to the identified project goals

Appendix A. Evaluation Data Matrix

Metric	Data Source	Type	Related Goal(s)
Number of formal partnerships established	Administrative Records	Process	1b
Number of operations related to ORT completed	Administrative Records	Process	1a
Number of FTE staff assigned to ORT	Payroll and Administrative records	Process	1a
Number and type of equipment put into operation	Administrative Records	Process	1a
Number of retailer reports submitted to the Sheriff's Office	RMS	Process	1c
Number of referrals to the DA related to ORT (grant-funded and other)	Administrative Records	Outcome	1a
Number of arrests related to ORT	RMS	Outcome	1a
Value of stolen property recovered during grant-funded operations	ORT Operations Tracking Log	Outcome	1a
Number of loss prevention managers trained	Training Tracking Log	Process	1c
Number of loss prevention staff trained by managers	Training Tracking Log	Process	1c
Loss prevention personnel knowledge of ORT prevention strategies and reporting	Retailer Training Pre-Post Survey	Outcome	1c
Number of training sessions law enforcement personnel completed	ORT Staff Training Tracking Log	Process	1a
Number of law enforcement personnel trained	ORT Staff Training Tracking Log	Process	1a
Number of ORT investigations aided by project technology	ORT Operations Tracking Log	Outcome	1a
Number of grant-funded media shared related to ORT per year	Administrative Records	Process	1b
Number of community meetings and educational classes held	Community Events Tracking Log	Process	1b
Community perception and awareness of ORT	Community Survey	Outcome	1b
Number of retailer partnerships established	AUROR System	Process	1b
Number of regional ORT meetings attended	Community Events Tracking Log	Process	1b
Successes, challenges, and lessons learned	Key Stakeholder Interviews	Outcome	1a, 1b, 1c