

The New York State Gun Involved Violence Elimination Initiative

Working Paper 2019 – 02



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Background of the Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative

Statewide

The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) sponsors various initiatives to reduce crime across New York State, such as Operation IMPACT, which began in 2004. This program identified 17 counties across New York State, outside of New York City, that were responsible for more than 80% of the state's Part I crimes. In 2014, IMPACT narrowed focus and shifted to the Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative. Within the same counties, 20 individual jurisdictions participate in the GIVE initiative to reduce gun violence [Appendix A], with the goal of reducing three specific areas of firearm related crime: the number of shooting incidents, shooting victims (persons hit) and individuals killed by gun violence (DCJS, n.d.).

Strategies to reduce these firearm-related crimes include enhanced crime analysis approaches and problem-oriented policing tactics. More specifically, there are also four evidence-based practices that these jurisdictions can utilize in their efforts to reduce gun violence.

“Crime-fighting strategies developed under GIVE vary by jurisdiction and include, but are not limited to: enhanced patrols in identified “hot spots” or locations that have shown to be the most prone to gun violence; focused deterrence against violent gangs and groups considered responsible for the most gun violence in communities; increased supervision of individuals on parole and probation; and the deployment of street outreach workers to interrupt cycles of violence or prevent retaliation” (DCJS, n.d., para. 4).

Problem-oriented policing, incorporated into each aforementioned strategy, offers a more proactive approach to traditional police efforts. Problem-oriented policing involves identifying underlying problems to alleviate crime at its root cause, and prevent future problems (Goldstein, 1979).

Aspects of procedural justice are implemented within each of these strategies as well. Procedural justice involves transparency (information-sharing), giving citizens a voice, treating everyone with respect and being neutral and fair throughout decision-making processes.

Incorporation of procedural justice principles in police practices can increase citizen trust in police (Blader & Tyler, 2003).

Funding is awarded to the each jurisdiction's Police Department, District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, and Probation Departments for personnel salaries (e.g., crime analysts, prosecutors, Field Intelligence Officers), training, overtime, equipment and other relevant costs (DCJS, n.d.). These and other relevant partners are expected to meet regularly to discuss their strategies, crime and data analyses, program successes and shortcomings, and alternative approaches.

Evidence-Based Strategies

Focused Deterrence

Focused Deterrence practices are rooted in deterrence theory, which argues that:

“In contemplating a criminal act, they [potential offenders] take into account the probable legal penalties and the likelihood that they will be caught. If they believe that the legal penalties threaten more pain than the probable gain produced by the crime, then they will not commit the crime. Their calculation is based on their own experience with criminal punishment, their knowledge of what punishment is imposed by law, and their awareness of what punishment has been given to apprehended offenders in the past.” (Akers, 2012, p. 16).

Police and other criminal justice partners can increase certainty, swiftness (quickness) and severity of punishment through messages of zero tolerance and increased supervision of individuals and groups involved in gun violence (Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy [CEBCP], n.d., “Focused Deterrence”). These messages are best delivered with direct interaction in the different types of Focused Deterrence events (i.e., Call-In or Custom Notification). These messages also communicate incentives for compliance and consequences of continued violent activity. For GIVE, the ‘hard’ message (e.g. “we know what you are involved in, we are watching you and your group, and we will go after all of you if the violence continues”) is delivered by law enforcement, and ‘soft’ messages to emphasize the willingness of the community to help these individuals are often given by social service providers (CEBCP, n.d., “Focused Deterrence”).

Hot Spots Policing

Hot Spots Policing is the process of using data and additional policing information to determine where a higher rate of crime occurs within an area. While police have not ignored geography in the past, Hot Spots Policing requires a focus on geography and locations of crime, and prioritizes policing resources on the micro-areas that have the most crime and disorder (CEBCP, n.d., “Hot Spots”). The focus of Hot Spots Policing is on places where gun violence is highly concentrated, rather than the people involved in this activity. Hot Spots Policing involves identify ‘hot’ areas, analyzing the problems of these areas, and developing tailored responses to them (CEBCP, n.d. “Hot Spots”). “Crime prevention effectiveness is maximized when police focus their resources on these micro-units of geography” (CEBCP, n.d., “Hot Spots”, para. 2).

Examples of Hot Spots Policing tactics may include increased time spent by officers in the identified areas, developing individualized responses based on the problems within each area, predictive policing and prevention efforts, and relying on crime analysis for additional information on the crime patterns and areas themselves (CEBCP, n.d., “Hot Spots”).

Street Outreach

Street Outreach offers a public health approach that concentrates on the high-risk individuals involved in these crimes. “One important benefit of a public health approach to gangs is a focus on primary prevention, emphasizing policies and programs that prevent violence – and gangs and gang membership – before it starts.” (Gebo, 2016, p. 376). Cure Violence, perhaps the most often cited and most well-known Street Outreach program, directs street workers to make contact with at-risk individuals to interrupt violence. The model also argues that violence is a disease that needs to be treated differently than other crime, as violence has negative effects on those who witness it, and can spread like a disease (Cure Violence, 2018).

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, known as CPTED, is a problem-oriented policing strategy that focuses on how an environment can create or promote opportunities for crime, and altering these environmental characteristics to prevent crime from occurring (Cozens & Hillier, 2005). Environmental changes may be modifications to physical structures or vehicular or pedestrian traffic flow. They may entail “target hardening” by modifying access points, installing spotlights or video surveillance. Modifications may involve broader changes to the surrounding environment, such as adding parks and recreation to encourage outdoor communal social activities (Cozens & Hillier, 2005).

Problem Oriented Policing and Procedural Justice

Problem-Oriented Policing [POP] strategies involve proactive identification of problems and targeting solutions to alleviate problems at their root (CEBCP, n.d., “Problem-Oriented Policing”). This concept was originally discussed by Herman Goldstein (1979) to bring a more proactive approach to crime prevention.

Procedural justice is an important approach in community perception and satisfaction with the police. Procedural justice is an important approach in community perception and satisfaction with the police.

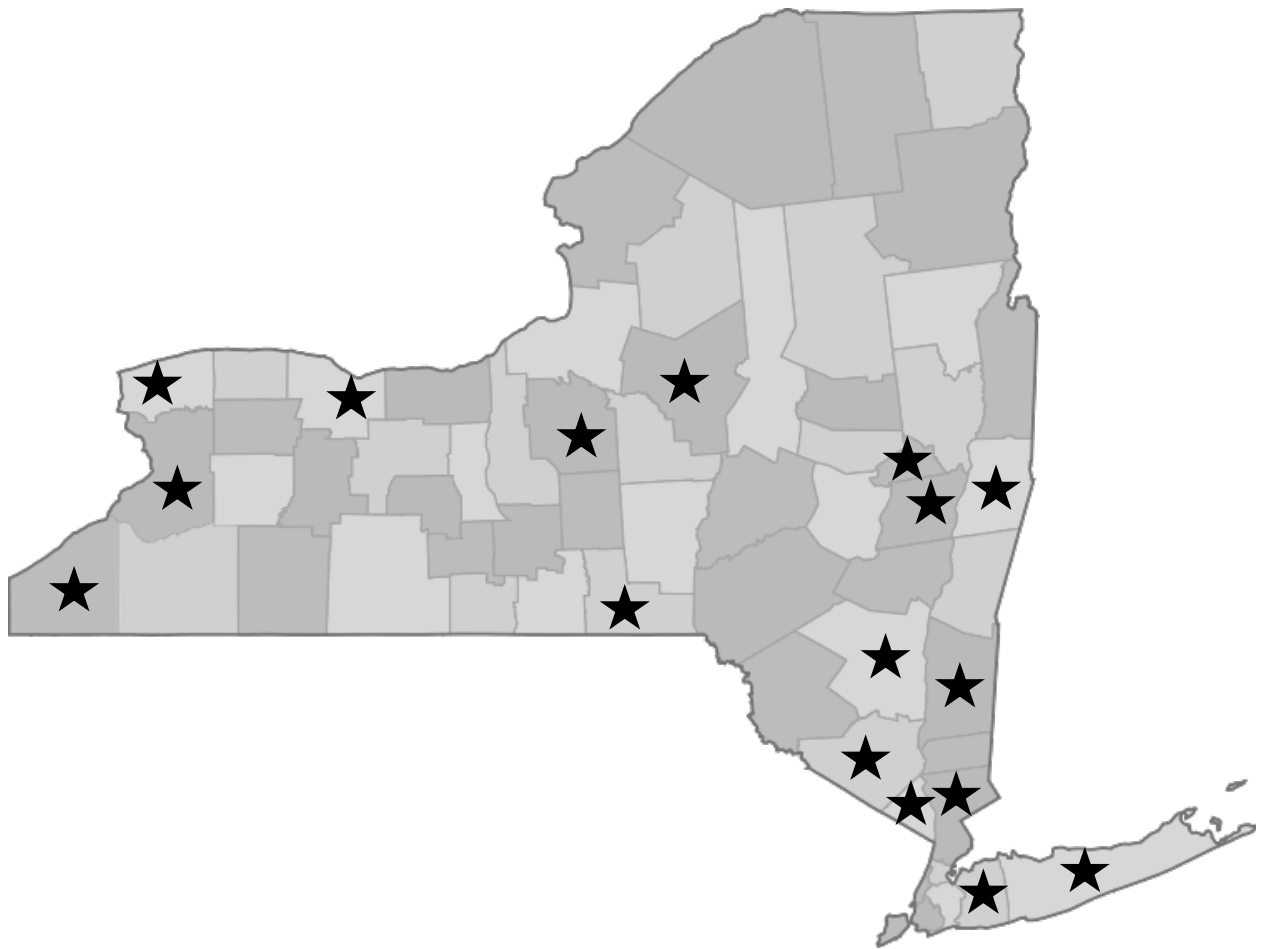
Implications, Limitations and Future Directions

The GIVE Initiative is a statewide program, which allows for variation between sites, based on their crime needs. This also allows other states to look at the GIVE Initiative and replicate statewide efforts in other areas. This paper is limited to a statewide overview, and does not discuss any locally-focused efforts, or any outcome data. These will both be examined in future working papers.

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Appendix A: New York State's Gun Involved Violence Elimination Participating Counties



★ GIVE County

Appendix B: GIVE Monroe Logo

