

Law Enforcement Related Violence Reduction Strategies (with Inventory)

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Introduction

The goal of this paper is to briefly summarize the state of knowledge on law enforcement related violence reduction strategies and to provide direction for adopting similar efforts.

Quality policing is inevitably linked to effective crime control and to the control of violent crime in particular. A police department's response to violence has important implications in many areas including the way resources are used, relations with the community and perception of the overall effectiveness of the department. Continuous work toward improving crime control is an important undertaking for any police department.

The first step in that process should be to assess the level and types of violence that exist in the area covered by this effort. Along with that it is useful to conduct an inventory of the efforts that are currently in place to address the problem of violence as you have assessed it.

The material below describes important core issues identified in efforts to reduce community violence. It also provides information based on accepted best practice and evidence based programs. Information on evidence based crime reduction programs has been collected by the Bureau of Justice Statistics of the US Department of Justice and can be found online at

<http://www.crimesolutions.gov/Programs.aspx>

Outline of Critical Issues (Inventory attached at end)

1. The need for Planning and Organization
2. Importance of Solving Violent Crime
3. Crime Analysis, Information and Data Collection
4. Partnership within the Criminal Justice System
5. Partnerships with the Community
6. Specific Interventions to Reduce Violent Crime

1. The Need for Planning and Organization

A serious effort will require planning. Planning should be information and data based and should include ongoing evaluation and review. It should include attention to regular police practices and specialized violence reduction and prevention programs. These steps will be useful.

- a. Assign responsibility for planning and managing violence reduction efforts.
- b. Assign team members to participate in planning and oversight of violence reduction efforts.
- c. Assure that regular meetings are held with written minutes and written plans.
- d. Assure that the planning team conducts a continuous process of evaluation and review.

- e. Many communities have found it advantageous to form a partnership with a faculty member from a local university who can serve in the role of research partner to the effort to address violence.

2. Importance of Solving Violent Crimes.

Effective policing is important for the reduction in violent crime. This includes making arrests for violent crimes, getting convictions and securing appropriate sentences to incarceration and removing violent offenders from the community. This reduces opportunities for repeat offenses and can deter other potential offenders. Improvements in clearance rates and effective prosecution have been shown to reduce violent crime (Fyfe, Goldkamp and White, 1997).

Important issues related to improving clearance rates:

- a. Particular attention should be focused on those violent crimes which make people most fearful and have the strongest impact on the community at large and on confidence in the police. These may include such things as gang related homicide, homicides in public places, and violent crimes where victims are not connected to criminals or criminal conduct.
- b. Do you track clearance rates by crime type for different precincts or subunits?
 - a. Begin by collecting clearance rates for violent crimes.
- c. Are dispatch procedures effective for responding to violent crimes.
 - a. Begin with an inventory of dispatch procedures.
- d. Are patrol officers trained and available as first responders to control crime scenes and preserve evidence?
 - a. Begin with an inventory of patrol skills and resources.
- e. Are investigative resources adequate in terms of personnel, training and resources?
 - a. Begin with an inventory of investigative resources.
- f. Is the evidence collection process adequate in terms of personnel training and resources?
 - a. Begin with an inventory of evidence tech skills and resources.
- g. Are the forensic science resources sufficient in terms of personnel, training and resources.
 - a. Begin with an inventory of forensic resources and their use.
- h. Are police working closely with prosecutors? Are regular meetings held with prosecutors to discuss law enforcement plans and to review cases based on the requirements for successful prosecution?
 - a. Begin by keeping and reviewing minutes of these meetings.

3. Crime Analysis, Information and Data Collection

Using information about crime trends and patterns will be important in efforts to reduce violence. That requires the capacity to analyze crime in as close to real-time as possible. This should

include information about precise geographic locations of crimes and situations likely to support crime. It should also include information about crime according to times of day, day of week and season over the course of the year. Crime analysis should include statistical information about crime and intelligence information from patrol and other police officers and from the community. Crime analysis can also include information on gangs, drugs, parole and probation cases, known sex offenders, bar and social club issues and school related problems. Analysis should result in written reports that are frequently updated.

A major part of crime analysis involves collection of intelligence data about offenses and offenders. Staff assigned as intelligence officers often work as part of a crime analysis unit. They gather information from interviews with victims, witnesses and offenders. This may also include working with jail staff and interviewing detained offenders to collect information on ongoing disputes or on gun possessors, gang membership and activity and on known offenders.

The planning process should include an inventory of resources for crime analysis including personnel, training and other resources. The planning team should also review and help design crime analysis reports and products.

Violence reduction efforts should include at least weekly meetings in which crime analysis material is reviewed and deployment of key police staff is discussed, and the previous week's efforts are reviewed.

Begin addressing this issue by conducting an audit of your crime analysis capabilities and resources. Do you have near real-time crime information for planning? Can you map local crime patterns? Do you analyze crime patterns and trends? Do you collect and use intelligence information about crime. What crime analysis products are generated and used?

4. Partnerships within the Criminal Justice System

Partnerships with other agencies of the criminal justice system can help advance violence reduction efforts. Partners can share intelligence information, technical resources such as analysis capabilities and communication resources, and manpower for strategic operations. These partnerships should include a) other law enforcement agencies at the local, state and federal level, b) prosecutors at the local and federal level, c) probation and parole agencies, d) detention, jail and prison agencies. Partnerships at the executive level can also support working groups and specific projects in which subordinates work together.

Below are examples of contributions partners can make to violence reduction efforts:

- a. Local prosecutors: provide feedback on evidence and case preparation: establish communication trees to improve warrants.
- b. Federal prosecutors: can join assessment of the most appropriate venue for prosecution of cases based on such issues as applicable statutes, potential penalties and standards of evidence.
- c. Probation and parole: can assist by focusing supervision on select offenders who may be violent or repeat offenders, may complement police efforts with additional search or arrest and revocation powers.

- d. Detention, jail and prison agencies: These may have access to valuable intelligence-based information on inmate interaction, visits, and phone calls; may have valuable information on gang affiliations or drug activity.

The planning team should discuss the process of establishing partnerships with other criminal justice agencies including expectations regarding the activities and responsibilities.

The law enforcement executive at the appropriate level should meet individually with executives from potential agencies to discuss and encourage participation.

The law enforcement executive should organize regular meetings of the partners. These should occur at least monthly and should include agendas and meeting minutes. These meetings should include reviews of crime analysis information, discussion of antiviolenace tactics and strategies and reviews and evaluation of the partnership efforts.

Begin addressing this issue by conducting an audit of your partnerships with criminal justice agencies. What partnerships exist at the executive and working group level? How often do partner meetings occur? What issues are discussed? Are minutes kept? How do partners work together to address violent crime?

5. Partnerships with Non-Criminal Justice Agencies and the Community

Partnerships with other government agencies, community organization and community members can play an important role in violence reduction. These partners can provide useful information and may also provide supplemental services of value to the police. These organizations may include school systems, social service organizations (including child protective services) , street outreach organizations, housing agencies and religious organizations. Not for profit organizations such as domestic violence advocacy groups, programs for children and even medical centers which deal with injuries from violence provide valuable partnerships.

In addition to partnership with formal organizations direct outreach to the community in the form of both frequent public meetings and a liaison relationship with a standing committee to foster community interaction can be useful.

Begin addressing this issue by conducting an audit of your partnerships with other government agencies, community organizations and community members. What partnerships exist? How often to partner meetings occur? What issues are discussed? Are minutes kept? How do partners work together to address violent crime?

6. Specific Law Enforcement Based Interventions to Reduce Violent Crime:

A number of specific programs and interventions have been widely recognized as useful in crime and violence reduction efforts. As the references indicate, some of the programs discussed below were developed as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a Department of Justice sponsored initiative to reduce gun crime (US Department of Justice, 2004). Also, as noted, some

of these programs have been reviewed and supported by empirical evidence in the BJA review of interventions mentioned above and found in the references.

A major component of Project Safe Neighborhoods is its underlying problem-solving approach to addressing gun crime. The development and implementation of anti-violence programs emerge from an analysis and understanding of local crime problems and of available local resources. Problem solving methods have been a critical part of successful interventions. The intervention efforts presented below were all the result of data-based problem solving processes.

a. **Deployment Based Interventions-Hot Spot Policing:** This involves temporary deployment of police for preventive patrol based on crime analysis identifying geographical and temporal locations of crime. Approaches have included increasing presence in problem areas, as well as focusing on suspicious behavior, aggressive traffic enforcement, and stop-and-search approaches.

Example: The Minneapolis Preventive Patrol was a targeted policing program with the goal of preventing and reducing overall crime in high-crime areas in Minneapolis, Minn. In order to deter criminal activity, the Minneapolis Police Department utilized strategies to identify "hot spots" of crime and increase police presence in these areas. The strategies implemented by the program were intended to provide a general deterrent effect in high-crime areas.

The program focused on small clusters of high-crime addresses, rather than entire patrol beats or neighborhoods. These were known as "hot spots" of crime, and were identified based on the frequency of calls for service to the area. Officers from the Minneapolis Police Department provided intensive patrol services to the high-crime areas of the city. The program focused on increasing mere police presence in "hot spots" of crime, rather than the specific activities conducted by officers during patrols.

Example: The Indianapolis (Ind.) Directed Patrol program was designed after the Kansas City (Mo.) Gun Experiment of 1992–93, which used aggressive traffic enforcement to seize illegal weapons in a high-crime area. After the success of this experiment in seizing illegal firearms to reduce violent crime, the Indianapolis Police Department implemented its own version of the program in 1997.

The main goal of directed patrol was to reduce crime in Indianapolis, particularly violent firearm-related crimes, by increasing police presence in high-crime areas. This proactive approach allowed officers to concentrate on suspicious activities and high-risk offenders, and to provide a deterrent effect in high-crime areas. This would ultimately incapacitate dangerous offenders and remove illegal guns from the streets.

b. **Offender Notification Meetings:** These involve identification of potential offenders based on their criminal records and intervening to provide deterrence messages and services. This approach was developed as a significant component of crime reduction effort in Boston and has been implemented by David Kennedy in a variety of cities. (McDevitt, Decker, S. Kroovand Hipple and & McGarrell, E. 2006)

Example: The Indianapolis (Ind.) Violence Reduction Partnership (IVRP) was created in response to high levels of gun-related homicides in Indianapolis during the 1990s. It was a

replication of the “Project Ceasefire” initiative by the Boston (Mass.) Police Department, which simultaneously held meetings with gang members to communicate a message of deterrence and launched a gang crackdown. Inspired by the success of the Boston initiative, the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department created its own version of the program in 1998. The program used a specialized approach to reduce gun-related violence among those most at risk for offending, mainly gang-involved chronic offenders who used illegal firearms.

The program was comprised of three stages: identification, implementation, and outreach.

Identification. During this identification stage, research was conducted to find out details about the homicide problem in Indianapolis, including identification of key offenders and patterns of offending.

Implementation. During this stage, “lever pulling” meetings were held with probationers and parolees. In these meetings, a message of deterrence was communicated, along with the consequences of violating the law. These offenders were encouraged to take advantage of community services, such as mentoring, employment, housing, education, and vocational training. These meetings spread the message that violence will not be tolerated and that there are opportunities for these offenders to turn their lives around. The meetings were accompanied by crackdowns of local gangs to illustrate the message of deterrence and zero tolerance for violence.

Outreach. This stage depended upon the participation of community partners. Meetings were held to come up with ideas to supplement the program, and neighborhood leaders, social service providers, and ex-offender mentors were recruited to participate.

c. **High Point (North Carolina) Drug Market Intervention:** This draws on the focused deterrence strategy described above. In this case a particular drug market is identified; violent dealers are arrested; and nonviolent dealers are brought to a "call-in" where they face a roomful of law enforcement officers, social service providers, community figures, ex-offenders and "influentials" — parents, relatives and others with close, important relationships with particular dealers. The drug dealers are told that (1) they are valuable to the community, and (2) the dealing must stop. They are offered social services. They are informed that local law enforcement has worked up cases on them, but that these cases will be "banked"(temporarily suspended). Then they are given an ultimatum: If you continue to deal, the banked cases against you will be activated. Evaluations have shown that the drug markets have closed and there have been reductions in violent and drug-related crime, with no sign of displacement. A new understanding between law enforcement and the community has also been linked to the program. (Hipple, N, Corsaro, N., & McGarrell, E. 2010.)

d. **Homicide Reviews and Crime Incident Reviews:** These provide a way of sharing detailed information about specific types of crime, most often homicide, in the local criminal justice system and using that information to develop strategic approaches to reduce that

crime. The process may also contribute to closing open cases in the participating jurisdiction. Incident review has been one of the most widely adopted tools among PSN programs. Districts that have used them include Nebraska, Connecticut, the Eastern and Western Districts of Wisconsin, New Mexico, the Western District of New York, the Northern and Southern Districts of Indiana, the Middle District of North Carolina, and the District of Arkansas. These PSN task forces have built upon the experience of cities involved in the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI) including Indianapolis, Boston, and Rochester, New York (Klofas and Hipple, 2006).

e. **Chronic Offender Lists.** The development of traditional most wanted lists is most often based upon current investigations of specific offenses and thus relies most heavily on information from active investigations. While intelligence is important in addressing violent crime, this chronic violent offender strategy emphasizes the identification of individuals who are engaged in gun violence without specific reference to an individual case. The objective is more focused on identifying those individuals who have demonstrated continued involvement in gun crimes and thus represent a considerable danger to the community and less upon solving specific crimes. Thus, data analysis can be used to apply the selected criteria to criminal history data to identify individuals who share these characteristics. Law enforcement intelligence concerning these individuals can then be used to refine the list and determine enforcement strategies and priorities (Bynum and Decker, 2006).

f. **Gun Prosecution Case Screening.** The goals of the case review process are to incapacitate violent gun crime offenders and to communicate a deterrent message to potential offenders through increased certainty and severity of punishment for gun crimes. Gun prosecution case screening is a vehicle for finding the best venue for prosecution (i.e., federal or local court) in order to increase the certainty of sanctions for gun crimes and to remove the most serious gun crime offenders from the community (Decker and McDevitt, 2006).

g. **Operation Night Light.** Operation Night Light pairs probation officers with police officers to make surprise visits to the homes, schools, and worksites of high-risk youth probationers during the non-traditional hours of 7 p.m. to midnight in order to enforce the terms of probation. The teams also stop at various parks and street corners where youth congregate to see if any probationers are present. It becomes evident to youth that the probation and police officers are working together and are interested in probationer's activities and whereabouts. The program focuses on high-risk offenders, the relatively small percentage of probationers who pose a threat to public safety. This partnership provides benefits for both agencies, including enhanced search and supervision powers. The probation officers are permitted secure home visits which enhance credibility of probation and its enforcement. Benefits for the police include an additional tool to address serious crime problems and an additional means of affecting hot spots for serious crime including gang violence. This program began in Boston and has been widely adopted elsewhere. See http://www.sas.upenn.edu/jerrylee/programs/fjc/paper_mar02.pdf

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Inventory Attached Below

Law Enforcement Based Violence Reduction:

Inventory

The questions below draw on the preceding material and are intended to help you plan in the area of violence reduction by taking an inventory of your violence reduction and prevention efforts.

Date _____

Person Completing this _____

Planning

1. Do you have someone currently leading the planning effort? Name and contact information.
2. Is there a planning team? Please list team members and contact information.
3. Please provide the schedule of past and future meetings.
4. Please provide minutes of meetings.
5. Please provide copies of any planning documents that were developed.
6. Do you have a research partner from a local university? If not have you considered this? What, if any steps have you taken to identify a research partner?

Solving Violent Crimes

1. What percent of homicide cases did you make an arrest in last year? What are clearance rates so far this year? What is the conviction rate for homicide cases?
2. Summarize dispatch procedures for violent crime? Who gets dispatched? Do supervisors respond? How effective is the control of crime scenes? How are evidence tech resources scheduled and dispatched?
3. Describe the investigation resources and processes. How many investigators are available? How are they assigned? What is their training and experience?

4. Describe the forensic resources available. How is forensic testing of evidence accomplished? What kinds of tests can be done? How long does it take?
5. Do police have regular meetings with prosecutor to discuss crime strategy and to review the processing and outcome of cases? What is the schedule of meetings? Who participates? Are minutes kept?

Crime Analysis, Information and Data Collection

1. Describe your crime analysis resources and capabilities.
2. Do you have crime analysts? Where and when do they work?
3. Do you have access to current (at least weekly) maps of major crimes?
4. Do you review crime according to the time it occurs on a weekly basis?
5. Describe your crime intelligence gather and storage process.
6. Do you have a database of gangs and gang members that is kept current?
7. Do you have a weekly meeting at which crime analysis products are shared? Who attends?

Partnerships within the Criminal Justice System

1. Do you have partnerships with:
 - a. Other local law enforcement agencies
 - b. Federal law enforcements agencies
 - c. Local prosecutor
 - d. Federal prosecutors
 - e. Probation
 - f. Parole
 - g. Detention and/or jail staff
 - h. Prison staff
 - i. Others (please list)
2. Do the partners meet together regularly? What is the schedule? Are minutes kept?

Partnerships with Non-Criminal Justice Agencies and the Community

1. Do you have partnerships with
 - a. Local schools and school systems: please identify_____
 - b. Social service organizations: please identify_____
 - c. Street outreach organizations: please identify_____
 - d. Religious organizations: please identify_____
 - e. Housing agencies: please identify_____
 - f. Public transportation agencies: please identify_____
 - g. Hospitals or medical centers: please identify_____
 - h. Other agencies or not-for-profits: please identify_____
2. Do you have regular individual meetings with these agencies or organizations?
3. Do you work with these agencies and organizations in crime reduction activities? How?
4. Do you have regular meetings with them as a group?
5. Do you keep minutes of meetings with them?

Specific Law Enforcement Based Interventions to Reduce Violent Crime

1. Describe any specific program you have to reduce or prevent violent crime.
2. Do you use any of the following:
 - a. Hot spot policing
 - i. Geographically based
 - ii. Geographically and person focused
3. Do you currently have any of the following, or similar programs?
 - a. Offender Notification Meetings
 - b. High Point Drug Market Intervention
 - c. Homicide Reviews
 - d. Chronic Offender Lists
 - e. Gun Prosecution Case Screening
 - f. Operation Night Light (joint police/probation operation)
 - g. Other: please specify_____

Other

1. Please describe any other specific activities you engage in that are intended to reduce or prevent violent crime.