U.S. Department of Justice

Project Safe Neighborhoods: Strategic Interventions

Strategic Problem-Solving Responses to Gang Crime and Gang Problems: Case Study 8

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PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS
America's Network Against Gun Violence

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Overview

The last decade of the 20th century witnessed significant declines in the rate of crime in the United States. This was true for most types of crime, including homicide and serious violent crime.[1] Despite these declines, the level of gun crime in the United States remains higher than that experienced in other western democracies and is a source of untold tragedy for families and communities.[2] Given this context, in 2001 the Bush Administration made the reduction of gun crime one of the top priorities of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), along with combating terrorism and enhancing homeland security.

The vehicle for translating this priority into action is Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). PSN represents a commitment to gun crime reduction through a network of local partnerships coordinated through the nation's 94 U.S. Attorneys' Offices. These local partnerships are supported by a strategy to provide them with the resources that they need to be successful.

The PSN initiative integrates five essential elements from successful gun crime reduction programs, such as Richmond's Project Exile, the Boston Operation Ceasefire Program, and DOJ's Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative. Those elements are: partnerships, strategic planning, training, outreach, and accountability. The partnership element requires that the local U.S. Attorney create workable and sustainable partnerships with other federal, state, and local law enforcement; prosecutors; and the community. Strategic problem-solving involves the use of data and research to isolate the key factors driving gun crime at the local level, suggest intervention strategies, and provide feedback and evaluation to the task force. The outreach component incorporates communication strategies geared at both offenders ("focused deterrence") and the community ("general deterrence"). The training element underscores the importance of ensuring that each person involved in the gun crime reduction effort—from the line police officer to the prosecutor to the community outreach worker—has the skills necessary to be most effective. Finally, the accountability element ensures that the task force regularly receives feedback about the impact of its interventions so that adjustments can be made if necessary.

Partnerships

The PSN program is intended to increase partnerships between federal, state, and local agencies through the formation of a local PSN task force. Coordinated by the U.S. Attorney's Office, the PSN task force typically includes both federal and local prosecutors, federal law

enforcement agencies, local and state law enforcement agencies, and probation and parole. Nearly all PSN task forces also include local government leaders, social service providers, neighborhood leaders, members of the faith community, business leaders, educators, and health care providers.

Strategic Planning

Recognizing that crime problems, including gun crime, vary from community to community across the United States, that state laws addressing gun crime vary considerably, and that local and state resources vary across the federal judicial districts covered by U.S. Attorneys' Offices, PSN also includes a commitment to strategic planning whereby the PSN program is tailored to local context. Specifically, PSN provides resources for the inclusion of a local research partner who works with the PSN task force to analyze the local gun crime problem and to share the findings with the task force for the development of a proactive plan for gun crime reduction. The research partners assist the task force through analysis of gun crime patterns and trends that can help the task force focus resources on the most serious people, places, and contexts of gun violence. The research partners can also bring evidence-based practice to the task force discussions of gun crime reduction strategies.[3] The inclusion of the research partner was also intended to assist in ongoing assessment in order to provide feedback to the task force.

Although each district creates strategic interventions that make sense in their local context, one strategy shared by all PSN task forces is increased federal prosecution of gun crime. PSN is built on the belief that the increased federal prosecution of gun offenders will reduce gun crime through the incapacitation of gun criminals and the deterrence of potential offenders. This working hypothesis is based on the notion that federal sanctions for gun crime are often more severe than those either available at the state level or likely to be imposed at the state level. Further, federal prosecution may include sanctions unavailable at the local level. The focus on prohibited persons possessing or using a firearm is built on the finding that a significant portion of gun crime involves offenders and victims with significant criminal histories. Thus, by increasing the certainty that a prohibited person in possession will face strong federal sanctions, the goal is to persuade potential offenders not to illegally possess and carry a gun.

The commitment to increased federal prosecution appears to be borne out. Fiscal year 2005 witnessed over 13,000 individuals charged with federal gun crimes, the highest number ever recorded by DOJ. Since PSN's inception, the number of federal firearms prosecutions has increased 73 percent.[4]

Training

PSN has involved a significant commitment of resources to support training. This program has included training provided to law enforcement agencies on topics including gun crime investigations, gun crime identification and tracing, and related issues. Training on effective prosecution of gun cases has been provided to state and local prosecutors. Additional training has focused on strategic problem-solving and community outreach and engagement. By the end of 2005, DOJ estimates that nearly 18,000 individuals had attended a PSN-related training program sponsored by one of the many national PSN training and technical assistance partners.[5]

Outreach

The architects of PSN also recognized that increased sanctions would have the most impact if accompanied with a media campaign to communicate the message of the likelihood of federal prosecution for illegal possession and use of a gun. Consequently, resources were provided to all PSN task forces to work with a media partner to devise strategies for communicating this message to both potential offenders and to the community at large. This local outreach effort is also supported at the national level by the creation and distribution of Public Service Announcements and materials (ads, posters). These materials are direct mailed to media outlets and are also available to local PSN task forces.[6]

The outreach component is also intended to support the development of prevention and intervention components. PSN provided grant funding in fiscal years 2003 and 2004 to the local PSN partnerships that could be used to support a variety of initiatives including prevention and intervention. Many initiatives were built on existing programs such as school-based prevention, Weed and Seed, or juvenile court intervention programs.

Accountability

The leadership of the PSN initiative at DOJ has emphasized that PSN would focus on outcomes—i.e., reduced gun crime—as opposed to a focus on outputs such as arrests and cases prosecuted. That is, PSN's success is measured by the reduction in gun crime. This accountability component was linked to strategic planning whereby PSN task forces, working with their local research partner, are asked to monitor levels of crime over time within targeted problems and/or targeted areas.

Additional Information

For more information on Project Safe Neighborhoods, visit www.psn.gov. If you are interested in supporting your local Project Safe Neighborhoods program, please contact your local U.S. Attorney's Office.

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Strategic Problem-Solving Responses to Gang Crime and Gang Problems

The challenge of responding to gangs is substantial. According to U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) estimates, in the early 1990s there were more than 16,000 gangs and over 500,000 gang members in the United States (Curry, Ball, and Decker, 1996). Other studies (Maxson and Klein, 1994) document considerable movement of gang members across American cities. Compared to previous cycles of gang activity in the 1920s and 1960s, the current cycle of gang activity is spread across more cities, is more violent, and is more deeply entrenched (Klein, 1995).

A 2003 survey of law enforcement agencies (Egley, 2005) found that gangs are present in the majority of cities with a population over 50,000: 96 percent of cities over 250,000, 91 percent of cities between 100,000 and 249,999, and 70 percent of cities between 50,000 and 99,999 report the presence of multiple gangs. The presence of gangs is not restricted to cities, as 32 percent of cities with a population between 2,500 and 49,999 and 41 percent of suburban counties also reported the presence of gangs. Not surprisingly, the larger the jurisdiction, the more gangs and gang members were reported. Sixty-one percent of cities with a population over 250,000 reported more than 30 gangs and more than 1,000 gang members. For this group of large cities, 39 percent reported 10 or more gang homicides in 2002–2003.

Gangs in the 21st century have greater access to automobiles and high-powered firearms than did their predecessors. And the conditions of urban areas, particularly the growth of the urban underclass (Jackson, 1991; Klein, 1995; Vigil, 1988) and expanding youth population, portend greater difficulties in ending the conditions that foster gangs. These circumstances make responding to gangs more difficult than ever before.

One of the crucial factors that shapes the ability to respond to gangs is an understanding of the problem. Unfortunately, public perceptions of gangs are shaped more by media images, such as the evening news or movies, than by a solid understanding of what gangs are. In addition, most knowledge of gangs that comes from the criminal justice system is the product of studying only the most criminal or delinquent gang members. This is important given that conceptions of gangs are critical to determining the way communities respond. For example, Decker and Leonard (1991) found that members of one antigang task force based their knowledge of gangs on the media, a source the members considered the least reliable. The popular perception

sees gangs as well-organized groups of men who are committed to a common set of goals. In addition, from this perspective, gangs are seen as profit-making enterprises, intent on franchising themselves across the country.

In Newark, New Jersey, McGloin (2005) found that even within law enforcement, considerable variation in the understanding of gangs existed, and that officers believed gangs to be well organized with a central purpose. The view of gangs as well-organized, profit-oriented organizations also is reflected in the *National Drug Threat Assessment 2005* (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2005), which focuses on gangs involved in drug trafficking and related criminal enterprises. However, evidence from many communities throughout the United States suggests that local gangs often are loosely organized networks with shifting allegiances and weak ties to extra-local criminal organizations. It is against this backdrop that the authors attempt to determine the match between the understanding of gangs and the resulting responses to the gang problem.

The past decade has seen a remarkable growth in researchers' understanding of gangs. Ethnographic, survey, theoretical, and applied research have focused on the causes of gangs, as well as the nature of gang membership and gang activities. Such understanding contributes to the ability to formulate effective intervention strategies designed to turn gang members away from gangs and reduce the impact of gangs on communities. In addition, a number of gang intervention projects have been or are being subjected to increasingly rigorous evaluations.

This case study serves as background for Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) task forces that have been given the mandate to respond to gangs and gang-related gun crime in their districts. The case study presents information on trends in youth firearm violence and its connection to gangs and drugs, as well as research findings on gang prevalence. The case study then reviews a series of anti-gang intervention strategies that emerged during the 1980s and 1990s. These include legislative initiatives, as well as federal programs aimed at varying combinations of prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies. This section culminates with a review of the Boston Gun Project (Operation Ceasefire), which produced very promising findings in terms of a gang-focused strategy associated with a significant reduction in gun crime. Operation Ceasefire served as the foundation for DOJ's Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative and ultimately was one of the foundations for PSN. The second half of the case study focuses on a number of promising practices that have emerged as PSN task forces have analyzed gang problems, designed gang interventions, and implemented those strategies so that PSN task forces can learn from one another.

Youth Firearm Violence

Youth firearm violence peaked in the early 1990s. From 1987 through 1991, the percent of juvenile gun homicides increased from 64 percent to 78 percent, and in 1991 juveniles accounted for one out of every five people arrested on weapons charges (Allen-Hagen and Sickmund, 1993). By 1992, a record number of violent crimes were committed with handguns (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1993). The remarkable period of increase in homicide in the early 1990s was followed by a steady decline throughout the end of the decade and a leveling off into the first few years of the 21st century. Firearm violence has continued to decline, with nonfatal violent gun crime victimization rates reaching historic lows in 2004. Indeed, the 280,890 firearm crime incidents in 2004 represented a decline from more than 1.05 million in 1993 and 428,670 in 2000. The corresponding rate of gun victimization has fallen from 5.9 percent per 1,000 residents in 1993 to 1.4 per 1,000 residents in 2004 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006).

Despite this progress, elected officials and law enforcement leaders from across the United States warn of the potential for escalating rates of gun violence associated with the increase in gangs. This concern is supported by prior research that indicates gang involvement heightens the risk of possessing non-sporting firearms among youth (see Lizotte and Sheppard, 2001).

The Prevalence of Gangs

The first estimate of the magnitude of the nation's gang problem was published in 1975 (Miller). Six of the 12 cities in the study were classified as gang-problem cities, and it was estimated that these six gang-problem cities had 760 to 2,700 gangs and 28,500 to 81,500 gang members. And the largest concentration of gangs was in California, with more than 30 percent of all gangs.

Since the 1975 study, a number of surveys have been conducted to estimate the prevalence of gangs in the United States (Curry, Ball, and Fox, 1994; Curry, Ball, and Decker, 1996; Klein, 1995). For example, in 1995, the National Youth Gang Center (NYGC) conducted its first assessment of the national gang problem. The numbers produced by that assessment were larger than those of any prior 1-year survey, finding a total of 23,388 youth gangs and 664,906 gang members as reported by 1,499 agencies. The most recent data available in *Highlights of the 2004 National Youth Gang Survey* document approximately 760,000 active gang members and 24,000 active gangs in 2,900 communities with a population of 2,500 or more (Egley and Ritz, 2006). Equally important, the number of cities that reported that the gang problem was getting worse in 2004 increased to 47 percent from 42 percent in 2003.

Contemporary Responses to Gangs

Responding to gangs involves responding to the immediate, proximate causes of gang activity and gang violence, as well as more fundamental causes of gang involvement. Spergel and Curry (1993) have developed a comprehensive model of gang prevention, intervention, and suppression that attempts to address both proximate and fundamental causes. These strategies include suppression, social intervention, organizational change, community mobilization, and social opportunities provision.

Suppression strategies respond to the proximate causes of gangs and include law enforcement and criminal justice interventions like arrest, imprisonment, and surveillance. In a survey of 254 law enforcement agencies, 44 percent of the responding agencies reported that suppression was their primary strategy in responding to gangs. *Social intervention* approaches focus on emergency interventions, particularly in response to acts of violence or personal crisis. Thirty-two percent of cities said that they used social intervention strategies such as crisis intervention, treatment for youth and their families, and social service referrals. Gang members frequently are victims of violence or witnesses to a friend's victimization, thus the use of crisis intervention services immediately following a violent event is especially promising. Crisis responses may be most effective when they involve family members, are available at emergency rooms, and are mobilized by law enforcement, health care, or community groups. Strategies that concentrate on *organizational change* require the creation of a broad consensus about gang problems. This method was selected by 11 percent of the respondents, and typically includes the development of task forces to address gang problems. In general, organizational change will either lead to an awareness of the gang problems in the community and mobilize efforts to address them or produce a new set of relations among agencies and groups who respond to such problems. *Community mobilization* strategies coordinate and target services to meet gang members' needs more effectively. Only 9 percent of cities selected community mobilization as their modal response to gangs. The expansion of job prospects and educational placements is the primary focus of the fifth category of strategies for responding to gangs: social opportunities. This response seeks to confront the fundamental causes of gang formation and gang membership. The smallest number of cities, 5 percent, reported that the provision of social opportunities was their primary response.

Spergel and Curry argue that a balanced approach of suppression and other interventions, especially social opportunities provision, is most likely to be successful. The next section reviews gang legislation enacted in a number of states, as well as a series of federal initiatives that provide background for current PSN anti-gang efforts. These initiatives include varying emphases on suppression, intervention, and prevention.

Gang Legislation

By 1993, 14 of the 50 states had enacted statutes specifically directed at criminal gang activity. By 2005, this figure had grown to more than 35 (National Youth Gang Center, 2004), with California and Illinois having the most extensive and replicated legislation, particularly the Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention (STEP) Act in California and the Street Gang Terrorism Act in Illinois. California's 1988 STEP Act (California Penal Code § 182.22) includes a definition of a criminal street gang and provides for enhanced penalties for individuals convicted of a crime while a member of a street gang. Local ordinances in many California cities allow law enforcement officers to obtain a civil injunction that prohibits named gang members from congregating in public, carrying beepers, and drinking in public. Maxson, Hennigan, and Sloane (2003) assessed the effectiveness of such approaches and concluded that while the effect on crime is still not known, civil gang injunctions have several unanticipated positive consequences, including expansion of the response to gangs and increasing social intervention approaches.[7]

Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program

In 1988, the Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program was established in the Administration for Children and Families, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Applications for the first round of funding focused on single-purpose demonstration projects and innovative support programs for at-risk youth and their families. Sixteen consortium projects were funded for 3 years. In design, these programs constituted a federally initiated, coordinated, and monitored commitment to community-organized strategic responses to gang crime problems. This commitment was unprecedented. Nine more consortium projects were funded in 1992 with a total of $5.9 million, each for a period of 5 years for up to $750,000 per year. The consortium projects received the bulk of Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program funding and included a number of projects employing social intervention strategies. Over the 5 years, projects provided peer counseling, family education, youth empowerment, mentoring, crisis intervention, community restitution, and recreation. Priority funding areas for the delivery of services also targeted intergenerational gang families, adolescent females, and newly emerging immigrant and refugee youth gangs.

The Congressionally-mandated Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program's goals included facilitating federal, state, and local cooperation and coordination of agencies responding to gang and drug crime problems. Funding solicitations required applicant programs to incorporate a local evaluation plan, and an independent national-level evaluation was funded for the 16 projects initially funded. The national evaluation (Cohen et al., 1995) concluded that while local programs were generally effective in reducing delinquency and drug use among youth

participants, the programs were not successful at preventing or reducing gang involvement.

Comprehensive Response to America's Gang Problem

National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program

The first national assessments of the U.S. gang problem and the establishment in 1988 of the National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention Program by DOJ's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) were important parts of the federal response to gangs. The goals of this program were to (a) identify and assess promising approaches and strategies for dealing with the youth gang problem, (b) develop prototypes or models from the information thereby gained, and (c) produce technical assistance manuals for those who would implement the models (Spergel and Curry, 1993). The project included 12 prototypes or models for gang program development and 12 technical assistance manuals corresponding to each prototype. The major outcome of the project was OJJDP's resolution that communitywide responses were required for dealing with local-level gang problems (Bryant, 1989).

OJJDP Implementation of the Spergel Model

The Spergel model (Spergel, 1995), a direct outgrowth of the earlier work of Spergel and Curry (1993), has become the driving force in OJJDP's response to gangs. It is a flexible format for responding to gang problems at the community level. Separate required components focus on community mobilization and employment programs, with one agency acting as the lead or mobilizing agency. Law enforcement plays a central role in this process. Key agencies that must be involved include law enforcement, grassroots neighborhood organizations, and some form of jobs program. The Spergel model's flexibility encourages local program planners to assess the unique features of local gang problems and take advantage of local agency strengths. The guidelines for community mobilization are intended to facilitate interagency cooperation and minimize interagency conflict. With OJJDP funding, five demonstration sites were selected to implement and test the Spergel model in a variety of urban settings, with coordinated technical assistance and a systematic evaluation led by Spergel. In the Chicago community of Little Village, Spergel (1994; Spergel and Grossman, 1994) worked with a network of law enforcement officers, outreach youth workers, probation officers, court service workers, and former gang members to reduce violence between two warring coalitions of Latino street gangs. The project's evaluation results indicate a reduction in gang-related homicides, increased community organization and mobilization, and the channeling of gang-involved youth into educational programs and jobs (Spergel, Grossman, and Wa, 1998; Spergel and Wa, 2000).

SafeFutures Initiative

As the first few years of the 1990s brought record increases in levels of juvenile violence, OJJDP became convinced that the problems of serious, violent, and chronic offending and gang-related crime were related. It was decided that a major effort needed to be undertaken to test both the utility of OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders and the Spergel model in specifically targeted geographic settings. The policy result was the SafeFutures initiative. With OJJDP funding, SafeFutures demonstration sites were established in four urban sites (Boston, MA; Contra Costa County, CA; Seattle, WA; and St. Louis, MO), one rural site (Imperial Valley, CA), and one American Indian reservation (Fort Belknap, MT). All sites received initial funding in 1996. Funding for SafeFutures projects was larger ($1.4 million per year) and extended over a longer period of time (a 5-year commitment) than funding for previous comparable efforts.

SafeFutures programs incorporated specific suppression, opportunities provision, and neighborhood-focused services. As such, they were consistent with the Spergel model and were likely to provide a full test of the model's effectiveness. It is often difficult to determine the impact of a program, owing to the fact that its implementation can change substantially from the initial plan. In response, one key characteristic of SafeFutures was very close monitoring by OJJDP and support by consultants hired to provide technical assistance. A local evaluation also was mandated for each site, and all sites participated in the national evaluation. The national evaluation (Morley, et al, 2000) made one thing clear: mounting large-scale interventions designed to change the delivery of services to youth is very difficult. A number of the sites struggled with the Spergel model as well as local issues while moving toward implementation. In St. Louis, for example, the SafeFutures site had difficulty integrating law enforcement—a key component of the model—into service delivery and client identification. The St. Louis evaluation concluded that it would be harder to change the system that delivers services to youth than to change the behavior of gang-involved youth; in fact, control cases did better than those enrolled in the program. This highlights the importance of careful implementation of programs, a point made by Klein and Maxson (2006) in their assessment of major gang-control programs.

Gang Reduction Program

In 2003, OJJDP selected four sites to participate in the Gang Reduction Program (GRP): Los Angeles, CA; Milwaukee, WI; North Miami Beach, FL; and Richmond, VA. Each site engaged in a planning process involving problem understanding, coalition building, and planning activities prior to the implementation of a comprehensive, geographically targeted response to local gang problems. Each site was mandated by OJJDP to produce a plan that reflected a comprehensive approach based on an inventory of existing services and an analysis of

local crime and gang crime data. The National Youth Gang Center coordinated technical assistance, with support from the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Communities in Schools. The sites were to build on existing resources and use GRP funding to fill gaps and create new coalitions in their communities. All four cities have implemented the majority of their program, with outcome results not yet available. The major change in GRP over earlier efforts to implement OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy included superior articulation of primary and secondary prevention strategies, as well as the vertical coordination of local, state, and federal resources and programs. The major changes in GRP over the SafeFutures initiative included a single funding stream, the locus of accountability, and a clear, overarching focus on reducing gang activity as opposed to violence and delinquency.[8]

Community Oriented Policing Services

Anti-Gang Initiative

Community-oriented policing represents an even broader federal effort to respond to crime in a way that integrates law enforcement into a cooperative community problem-solving framework. In 1996, DOJ's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) launched a 15-city Anti-Gang Initiative (AGI). The 15 cities were selected because of their consistency in providing gang-related crime statistics to DOJ surveys previously described. Funding was mandated to be spent on community policing efforts to improve data collection, integrate law enforcement agencies into communitywide responses to gangs, and provide a safer setting in which less suppressive response programs can be given a chance to develop. In total, $11 million was made available to the cities in $1 million or $500,000 allocations depending on city size. The sites included Austin, TX; Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Dallas, TX; Detroit, MI; Indianapolis, IN; Jersey City, NJ; Kansas City, MO; Los Angeles, CA; Miami, FL; Oakland, CA; Orange County, CA; Phoenix, AZ; Salt Lake City, UT; and St. Louis, MO.

The program's three specific goals were to (1) develop strategies to reduce gang-related problems, (2) develop strategies to reduce gang-related drug trafficking problems, and (3) reduce the fear instilled by gang-related activities. Each jurisdiction was required to develop a formal written characterization of their local gang problem to include the number of gangs, number of members, age ranges, reasons for joining a gang, source and location of recruitment, location of activities, reasons for migration, and incidents of gang-related crime. These characterizations called for considerable detail—detail that in most cities was simply not available through traditional law enforcement data gathering. As a result, many jurisdictions began including local researchers when developing the view of gangs in the city.

Based on data that were collected, eight specific strategies were identified. Three of the jurisdictions (Detroit, Jersey City, and St. Louis) chose to use special curfew enforcement strategies to target juveniles out after curfew hours. Six jurisdictions (Boston, Indianapolis, Miami, Oakland, Phoenix, and St. Louis) emphasized the need to coordinate their funded activities with efforts to combat drugs and gangs already in place. In Boston, this meant that the AGI effort was specifically linked to the SafeFutures funding received from OJJDP, and in Phoenix a tie was developed between the G.R.E.A.T. Program (Gang Resistance Education And Training, a school-based gang prevention program targeted at junior high students[9]) and AGI efforts.

The most popular strategy was organizational development and change. Not surprisingly, 11 of the 15 jurisdictions used some form of this strategy. Typically, this approach attempts to enhance existing interventions by bringing new partners to the table to change an overall organization or strategic response. Often, police departments sought out the assistance of other law enforcement partners, but also turned to schools or social service agencies for help. Six cities saw information sharing as a key strategy to be funded by AGI, resulting in the use of enhanced technology to provide presentations, transfer data, or conduct analyses. For example, many cities took the opportunity to use Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to map gang, drug, and youth crime activities.

Eight of the jurisdictions chose to track gang members through the use of an enhanced or expanded database. In this way, they sought to better understand the number of gang members and nature of membership to develop additional suppression strategies and tactics. Nine of the jurisdictions specifically included schools as a partner in their AGI. Including schools often meant enhancing G.R.E.A.T. or Police Athletic League activities; in some cases, new partnerships were developed. Finally, eight of the jurisdictions mounted a community organization strategy, seeking to engage citizens and neighborhoods in crime prevention and control. Typically this strategy included presentations and meetings with relevant community groups.

Each jurisdiction was required to set aside 5 percent of total funds to conduct an evaluation. These evaluations were largely focused on process issues, given the limited amount of money available and limited timeframe. In the cities that completed evaluations, it was clear that when law enforcement was in charge of a suppression program, it generally worked according to plan; however, partnership ventures were considerably more difficult to accomplish, reinforcing Klein's and Maxson's (2006) observation. Given the Spergel and Curry model on linking suppression and opportunities provision, the likely impact of these suppression-only efforts may have been temporary or limited.

Youth Firearms Violence Initiative

Another COPS response to increased levels of firearm violence among youth was the Youth Firearms Violence Initiative (YFVI). Ten cities were selected to each receive a $1 million grant, with the objective to reduce violent firearm crime by youth: Baltimore, MD; Birmingham, AL; Bridgeport, CT; Cleveland, OH; Inglewood, CA; Milwaukee, WI; Richmond, VA; Salinas, CA; San Antonio, TX; and Seattle, WA. Jurisdictions were to develop innovative programs that enhanced proactive crime control efforts and prevention programs targeted at young people. Specifically, COPS wanted evidence that the number of violent firearm crimes committed by youth declined after implementation of these strategies. In addition, the agency expected that the number of firearm-related gang offenses and firearm-related drug offenses would decline. Each participating law enforcement department was required to develop new initiatives in three areas: (1) innovative strategies or tactics, (2) community policing orientation, and (3) new information systems. Local evaluations and a national evaluation were completed to examine the efforts of each site.

Considerable variation existed across participating sites regarding the strategies and tactics employed to achieve these objectives, although most strategies emphasized enforcement or combined enforcement with prevention efforts. The tactics included focusing on specific targets (gangs), neighborhoods, and firearm crimes and using dedicated units to address these issues specifically. Inglewood—a medium-sized city in the Los Angeles area with predominantly African-American and Hispanic residents—employed one of the most innovative strategies. Inglewood chose to target a single neighborhood of relatively small size. A full-time prosecutor and probation officer worked with the police department. The prosecutor worked to develop the Street Terrorist Enforcement and Prevention Act (discussed above), a civil injunction that is becoming a popular tactic in California. The probation officer was responsible for seizing hundreds of illegal firearms from youth on probation, employing his powers to search probationers' residences. The officer's efforts serve as an example of the kind of innovative partnerships that can be forged between different agencies of the criminal justice system. These partnerships—seen as critical to the success of the prevention and suppression of crime—diminished when grant funding ended, raising the important issue of the extent to which innovations and partnerships can be sustained once the money runs out.

The national evaluation demonstrated the plausibility of the hypothesis that interventions in most cities were accompanied by reductions in gun offenses. A specific geographic area comparable to the program area was chosen for comparison purposes, and gun offenses were tracked by week for the 2-year period prior to YFVI efforts and the 1-year period after the program. In each of the five impact evaluation sites, the decline in gun offenses per week was

greater than for the comparison area. While this is not conclusive proof that YFVI was solely responsible for the observed declines, it is consistent with that hypothesis. In almost every case, YFVI was strictly a suppression program; only rarely did it effectively integrate the activities of social service or prevention activities. However, in those cities where such activities were integrated (especially Milwaukee and Seattle), those activities and relationships remained well after the conclusion of the program.

Boston Gun Project

Perhaps no single intervention in the 1990s has received as much public attention as the Boston Gun Project (Kennedy, Braga, and Piehl, 1996; Boston Police Department and Partners, 1997). Also known as Operation Ceasefire, this project has been replicated in a number of cities across the country, including Minneapolis, MN, where it has been evaluated (Kennedy and Braga, 1998). At its heart, Operation Ceasefire employs the Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment (SARA) problem-solving model to assess youth violence. The SARA model requires that local jurisdictions gather data to determine the nature of local problems, analyze those data, and design a response to solve problems. The SARA model's final step requires that the response be carefully assessed and re-calibrated. The apparent success of this intervention largely rests on two features: (1) the careful background work conducted to understand the nature of youth illegal firearm markets, and (2) partnerships among the participating groups. Kennedy and his colleagues determined that the youth illegal firearm market was different from that of adults, was comprised of a relatively small group of serious offenders, was largely based on fear of attack by rival youth who often were gang members, and that stealing guns was the primary means by which young people acquired illegal guns. These findings led them to conclude that traditional methods of intervention may not be successful.

The Boston Gun Project involved a large interagency working group composed of representatives from the local police department; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); the U.S. Attorney; the local prosecutor; the departments of probation and parole; city youth outreach workers; the school district; and Kennedy's research team. The working group met regularly to review research and operational findings, and it is from these meetings that a response plan was developed. Two complementary strategies were developed: one that attempted to disrupt the illegal firearm market on the supply side, and another that targeted the demand side. On the supply side, ATF worked with the local police, prosecutors, and the U.S. Attorney to step up gun tracing and prosecution efforts; however, it is the demand side where the most interesting interventions were developed. Probation and parole officers engaged in night visits to their clients to enforce routine conditions of supervision that heretofore had not been regularly

enforced. Curfews and room searches were conducted as part of this effort. This was coupled with a series of dramatic meetings with local gang members, where key law enforcement officials announced and demonstrated the effects of a zero-tolerance policy for the use of illegal guns by youth in a number of Boston neighborhoods.

The Boston Gun Project evaluations have demonstrated that the program was quite successful. Youth gun crime, particularly homicide, recorded dramatic declines in Boston, and even greater declines than throughout the rest of the nation. Kennedy, Piehl, and Braga (1996; Kennedy, Braga, and Pehl, 2001) conducted both a process and outcome evaluation that demonstrated key components of the project. Kennedy and Braga (1998) replicated the Operation Ceasefire project in Minneapolis with similar results.

What are the key features of this effort to reduce gang firearm violence that appear to have made it successful? First, the intervention is based on data that come from local law enforcement and are presented in a way that leads naturally to policy interventions. Second, the use of data to guide the project did not end once the intervention began. Rather, the researchers continued to collect and use data to refine the intervention on an ongoing basis. Third, the intervention combined the efforts of a variety of committed groups and individuals. As Spergel and Curry (1993) remind us, no program based on a single form of intervention is likely to achieve success. By combining suppression at a number of levels (local, state, and federal) with social opportunities provision and broader-based enforcement (probation and parole), Boston found ways to get a handle on its gang problem. That said, it is important to return to the importance of sustaining efforts. When the Boston task force no longer met routinely to engage in the keen problem-solving activities that characterized its early operation, homicide rates began to creep back up.[10]

Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative

Given the success of the Boston Gun Project, in 1998 the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) provided support for a strategic problem-solving initiative in 10 U.S. cities. Known as the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI), task forces were coordinated through the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and given the mandate to address the most serious crime problem facing the jurisdiction. As in Boston, local research partners were asked to be part of the working groups to assist in problem-solving research, including problem identification and analysis, development of crime reduction strategies, and assessment of implementation and impact.

Among the initial group of SACSI cities (Indianapolis, IN; Memphis, TN; New Haven, CT; Portland, OR; and Winston-Salem, NC), gangs were frequently found to be a source of the local firearm violence problem. Many of the strategies to address firearm violence were borrowed from

the Boston Gun Project and attempted to deliver a deterrence-based message through offender notification meetings. For example, in Indianapolis, a crackdown on one violent gang was coupled with a series of offender notification meetings to communicate to gang and neighborhood crew members a dual message of the threat of federal sanctions for illegal gun possession (by prohibited people) and illegal gun use, as well as to provide linkages to services. Similar to Boston, Indianapolis experienced a significant decline in homicide (McGarrell and Chermak, 2003; McGarrell et al., 2006). In these cities, as well as the second set of SACSI sites (Albuquerque, NM; Atlanta, GA; Detroit, MI; Rochester, NY; and St. Louis, MO), the SACSI task force evolved into Project Safe Neighborhoods.

Project Safe Neighborhoods and Gangs

As already noted, research has consistently shown that gang involvement is a risk factor for being involved in gun crime as both victim and perpetrator (e.g., Braga, 2004). This finding suggests that a focus on gangs may provide a strategic intervention point for reducing gun crime, at least in certain PSN jurisdictions.[11]

As with SACSI, one of the unique components of PSN has been the involvement of local researchers as partners in the PSN task force. A key role of the research partners is to analyze local gun crime patterns. Although varying from district to district, this approach often includes analyzing calls for police service, crime incident reports, arrest reports, geographic patterns, and street-level knowledge from law enforcement and other criminal justice system professionals. Some jurisdictions include data from police gang units, although in some jurisdictions gang data are either sparse or nonexistent. In 2005, 61 of the 94 PSN task forces reported that gangs constitute a dimension of their gun violence problem. The following sections highlight some the PSN task force's activities to analyze and respond to gang-related gun violence.

Eastern District of California—Stockton

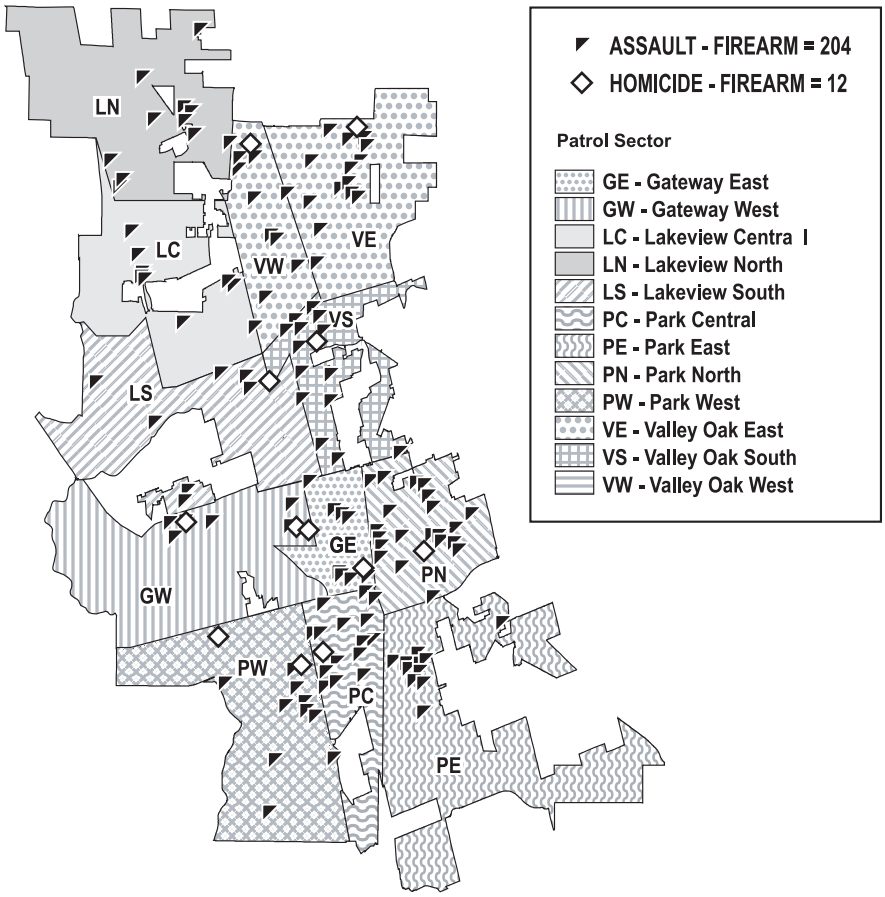
The Eastern District of California (EDCA) covers more than 87,000 square miles, encompassing 34 counties and a population of nearly 7 million people. Under EDCA's jurisdiction are six major urban areas: Bakersfield, Fairfield, Fresno, Sacramento, Stockton, and Vallejo. The EDCA PSN task force's initial step was to initiate a problem analysis, which was conducted by the task force's research partner (RP), Dr. Anthony Braga, from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Data from numerous sources were compiled in an effort to identify the district's gun violence problem.[12] From 1991 to 2001, compared to other large cities in the district, Stockton had the highest average homicide rate of 20 per 100,000 population and an average violent crime rate of 1,461 per 100,000 population.[13] In 2002, 26 of Stockton's 35 homicides involved a gun. After a low in 1996 of 205 gun assault

incidents, Stockton experienced 435 incidents in 2001, a record high over the 10-year period. As displayed in figure 1, homicides and gun assaults are concentrated in particular geographic locations of the city. The analysis of gang activity in Stockton resulted in an estimate of 38 gangs with more than 1,500 gang members. Approximately 4 percent of Stockton's population between 15 and 24 years of age are believed to be gang members.

As the problem analysis continued, consideration was given to the role that gangs play in firearm violence in Stockton. The RP looked at circumstances surrounding homicides in Stockton over a 3-year period. Nearly 60 percent of the gun homicides in Stockton from January 2000 to June 2003 involved gang-related motives. Indeed, 61 percent of homicide offenders and 53 percent of homicide victims were known gang members. Of the 103 homicide offenders during this time period, almost 90 percent were male, nearly 43 percent were Hispanic, 26

Figure 1: Stockton Firearm Assault and Homicide Locations, January 2000–June 2003



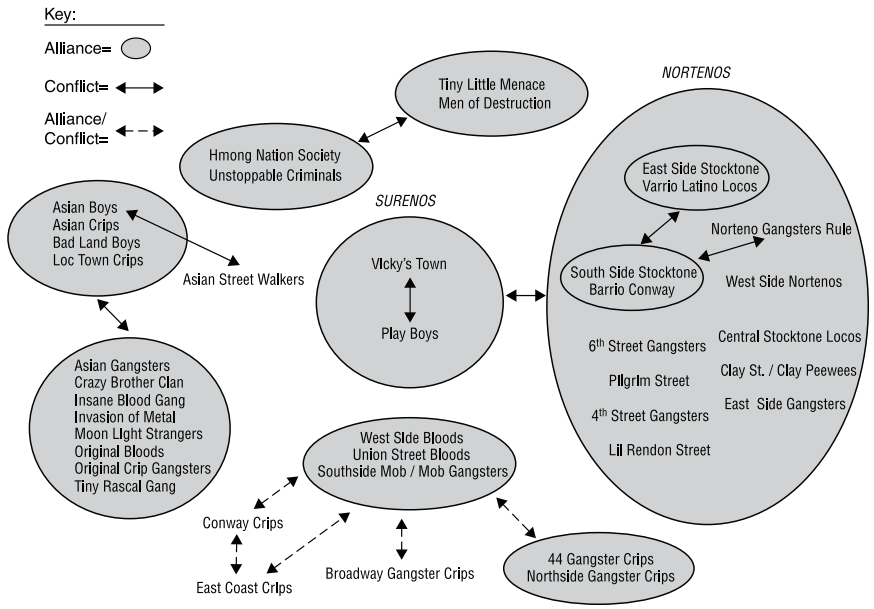
Source: Anthony Braga, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government

percent were African-American, 17 percent were White, and 15 percent were Asian. The mean age was 26.8 years. Of the 112 homicide victims, 82 percent were male, 44 percent were Hispanic, 23 percent were African-American, 18 percent were White, and 15 percent were Asian; the mean age was 33.2 years.

Similar problem analysis steps were taken with aggravated assaults involving a gun. From January 2002 to June 2003, there were 82 gun assault offenders, of which 96 percent were male, 38 percent were Hispanic, 33 percent were African-American, 19 percent were Asian, and 10 percent were White. The mean age was 24.3 years. In comparison, of the 971 gun assault victims during the same timeframe, 66 percent were male, 32 percent were Hispanic, 32 percent were Asian, 19 were African-American and 16 percent were White. The mean age was 30.2 years. In contrast to homicides, offenders and victims involved in aggravated assaults were less likely to be gang members; however, 41 percent of offenders and 25 percent of victims were known gang members. Given the estimate that 4 percent of the city's youth population are believed to be involved in gangs, these data suggest that gang members are contributing significantly to the city's firearm violence problem and that gang members are at substantial risk for being involved in gun violence.

As a further step in the analysis, the RP worked with law enforcement officials to map out the structure of gangs in Stockton and to identify both gang alliances and conflicts (see figure 2). This approach is similar to analyses conducted in the Boston Gun Project and can be

Figure 2: Conflicts Among Active Stockton Street Gangs



Source: Anthony Braga, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government

used to identify gangs that can be given priority for strategic interventions such as offender notification meetings, street-level enforcement, and prevention activities.

The analysis led the task force to identify both suppression and prevention strategies for addressing gang-gun violence. PSN enforcement strategies have included:

- Project Exile (federal prosecution strategy).
- Offender notification meetings.
- Operation Peacekeeper (pulling-levers deterrence strategy).

Prevention approaches, funded for 3 years with PSN grants, have included a gang outreach worker who interacts with gang members, offering suggestions for getting out of the gang and explaining consequences of continued gang involvement. The PSN media campaign was tailored around gang-gun crimes, with a focus on 14–24 year olds and an emphasis on 18–24 year olds. In addition, because the task force believed the traditional media campaign was not getting the "consequences" message across to gang members, handouts demonstrating the consequence of gun crime were distributed at offender notification meetings.

District of Massachusetts—Lowell

The District of Massachusetts has chosen to focus on nine urban jurisdictions in its PSN initiative.[14] One of those cities, Lowell, is an urban city in northeastern Massachusetts with a population of 104,081 people. The city had a violent crime rate of 950 per 100,000 residents and property crime rate of 3,085 per 100,000 residents in 2004, based on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Uniform Crime Reports (2005). Compared to all U.S. cities with populations greater than 75,000, Lowell placed above average in terms of violent crime and below average in terms of property crime.

From 2000 to 2004, Lowell had a relatively stable average homicide rate of 4.5 per year. Gun crime in Lowell involved young males with prior criminal histories and gang involvement. Based on information from the police department's gang intelligence database and a focus group of detectives, 74 percent of gun homicide offenders (14 of 19) and 46 percent of aggravated gun assault offenders (10 of 22) were active gang members. Looking at incidents, the focus group classified 27 percent of aggravated gun assaults as gang-related and an additional 9 percent as gang- and drug-related, which together are the most prevalent incident characteristics in Lowell. The focus group approach also uncovered that the community had 19 active street gangs with an estimated 650 to 750 members. Most of these gangs are small, loosely organized groups. Lowell street gangs tended to be located in either the Hispanic or Asian community, with very little interracial

membership. During 2001 and early 2002, the problem analysis revealed that Asian youth gangs were contributing disproportionately to the city's gun assault problem.[15]

The PSN strategy included an incapacitation strategy focused on a relatively small number of the most serious, chronic gun offenders, as well as a focused deterrence strategy geared at youth gang members. The incapacitation strategy was facilitated by a joint prosecution gun case screening process whereby federal and local prosecutors reviewed cases to ensure that the most serious chronic offenders received the longest sentence in either federal or state court. The focused deterrence strategy was based on direct communication to at-risk youth gang members through offender notification meetings, increased supervision of probationers, and focused police patrol. A particularly innovative strategy relied on adults from the Asian community believed to be involved in gambling operations to exert informal social control over Asian youth gangs to desist in gun crime.

The impact assessment suggests a reduction in aggravated assaults with a firearm, the principal focus of the PSN Lowell task force. The reduction (-28 percent) was considerably larger than that observed in several comparison Massachusetts cities (McDevitt et al., 2006). The assessment also indicated that a multi-agency partnership, employing a research-driven strategic problem-solving approach, was effectively implemented in Lowell.

District of Columbia

The District of Columbia (D.C.) has approximately 553,523 residents in a 61-square-mile radius (9,074 people per square mile). Historically, the city has ranked among a small group of cities as having high rates of homicide and violent crime. In comparison to other urban cities similar in population, D.C.'s violent crime rate (1,325 per 100,000) is higher than Seattle's, with a population of 575,816 and a violent crime rate of 660 per 100,000, and Fort Worth, with a population of 594,950 and a violent crime rate of 636 per 100,000, but lower than Nashville, with a population of 555,134 and a violent crime rate of 1,550 per 100,000 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2005).

Addressing gun crime, and particularly guns and gang violence, is a focus of D.C.'s PSN initiative. D.C. has one PSN task force; however, a working group consisting of senior leadership from the U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO) for the District of Columbia, District of Columbia Office of the Attorney General, FBI, Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), ATF, Drug Enforcement Administration, Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency, and the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS), meets bi-weekly to review PSN efforts. Based on task force perceptions that gangs were involved in the city's gun violence, in 2004 three of the PSN partners, the USAO, MPD, and the Urban Institute (the PSN research partner), began conducting "gang audits."

Guided by a model developed by David Kennedy, and with assistance from PSN task force members in Rochester, NY (Western District of New York) who were also using Kennedy's model, a comprehensive review of intelligence information and statistical crime data led to the identification of the most problematic gangs in D.C. Gangs in the most need of attention have been identified in five police districts (the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th districts). Synonymous with gang audits, incident reviews have helped identify 136 of the most violent gang/crew members in three of the highest crime areas in D.C. Presentation of crime mapping data and intelligence sharing at incident reviews, where the RP played a major role, has guided planning, development, and implementation of gun violence reduction strategies.

The Thursome Group in police district 7 was the first gang to be "taken down" by PSN enforcement efforts. In January 2005, making use of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 violations, MPD, HUD, the District of Columbia Housing Authority, and USMS were able to evict four families of the Thursome Group. Several arrests of individuals in the Thursome Group were made, and 37 offenders await sentencing. Unique to D.C., the USAO prosecutes both federal and local cases.

As in a number of PSN task forces, the District of Columbia's PSN task force uses offender (both probation and parolee) call-ins as a means of communicating a deterrence-based enforcement message and providing access to community reentry sources. Call-ins, also referred to as offender notification meetings, are held in the PSN focus districts.[16] The first call-in was held January 13, 2005 in district 7 with 40 offenders in attendance. PSN's infiltration of the Thursome Group was used as an example to make the newly released offenders aware of the consequences of re-offending. As of fall 2005, three call-in sessions attended by a total of 115 offenders had been held. Each subsequent call-in has made an example of gangs or crews from other focus areas that were infiltrated by PSN enforcement and prosecution efforts. An entire year's worth of call-ins was planned through 2005, with a session occurring approximately every 3 months.

On the prevention side, Project LEAD (Legal Enrichment And Decision-Making) runs in 22 schools, all within PSN focus areas. Held throughout the school year, 5th graders receive information weekly on issues such as tagging, identity theft, peer pressure, gangs, guns, and conflict resolution. Typically, there are two 5th grade classes in each school, and instruction takes place in the classrooms. Students receive homework, do role-playing, act out skits, and go on field trips. Project LEAD teams responsible for running the project are made up of attorneys, paralegals, line officers, and School Resource Officers. A Juvenile Violence Coordinator, located in D.C.'s Office of the Attorney General and sustained by PSN funds, serves as a representative on the Weed and Seed Gang Intervention Partnership and helped develop school-

based, anti-violence presentations implemented in early 2006 in middle and high schools. The Weed and Seed Gang Intervention Partnership was formed in response to a rash of gun violence homicides in one of the District's Latino communities. Composed of community service groups, social service providers, government agencies, law enforcement, and city residents, the Weed and Seed Gang Intervention Partnership serves as a forum to exchange gang/gun intelligence, organize peer mediations, and provide mentoring and service programming for at-risk youth in an effort to prevent gun violence and reduce homicides. Since 2003, there have been no homicides in this target community. Similar efforts with slight modifications have begun in another PSN/Weed and Seed area in the city.

Gang audits, Section 8 evictions, call-ins, incident reviews, and prevention initiatives such as Project LEAD and the Weed and Seed Gang Intervention Partnership are ongoing. The PSN task force touts a strong and committed partnership as evident by attendance at bi-weekly meetings and participation in intervention and prevention efforts in D.C. The RP is tracking outcomes in the PSN focus areas. Although results are preliminary, D.C.'s comprehensive approach to gangs and gun violence appears promising, as there was nearly a 9 percent reduction in overall crime and a 4-percent reduction in homicides from September 2004 to September 2005.

District of Nebraska—Omaha

The District of Nebraska (NE) covers 93 counties and nearly 77,000 square miles. The state ranks 30th for violent crimes (309 per 100,000 population; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). The most populated county, Douglas, includes the City of Omaha. With an estimated population of 409,416, Omaha is the largest urban center in the district.

In 1999, NE participated as an unfunded SACSI site. The following year, Project Impact, a youth-focused gun violence initiative, was implemented, and the USAO handled project oversight. OJJDP's Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) funds supported operational activities and the development of a comprehensive offender database system. The JABG funding source limited the target population to juveniles in the Omaha area.

Project Impact was modeled after gun-violence reduction programs such as Operation Ceasefire (Boston, MA) and Project Exile (Richmond, VA). It included local, state, and federal law enforcement; probation and parole officers; social services; and community partners. The premise of the program was to hold serious, violent juvenile offenders accountable for their actions. Enforcement strategies included offender notification meetings, Operation Nightlight (police-probation home visits), and Operation Ceasefire (deployment of police and probation/parole officers to areas experiencing a rise in gun violence). Community teams composed of local organizations, schools, churches, neigh-

borhood associations, and concerned neighbors in north and south Omaha were the foundation for prevention efforts and organized events such as neighborhood clean-ups, neighborhood safety block parties, school events, and art contests.

Building on Project Impact, PSN was implemented in February 2003 in Omaha. PSN broadened the focus from youth gun violence to gun violence.[17] The PSN RP from the University of Nebraska at Omaha worked with the Omaha Police Department (OPD) to conduct an initial problem analysis, as well as ongoing problem analysis and impact assessment. The research indicated that much of the gun violence in Omaha involved gang members and the intersection of gangs and drugs. OPD identified 28 gangs and more than 2,600 gang members, and in 2003, there were 23 gang-related homicides by firearm.

The Omaha PSN task force has implemented a comprehensive gang strategy that includes suppression and prevention activities. A vital suppression strategy, the USAO's Guns, Gangs, and Drugs (GGD) monthly meetings are attended by local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies including OPD's gang, narcotics, robbery, and homicide units. Federal, county, and city prosecutors also attend the meetings, and cases that meet federal guidelines are immediately assigned to an Assistant U.S. Attorney. If the case will not be prosecuted federally, it is assigned to the Douglas County Attorney's Office or the Omaha City Prosecutor's Office. As a result of the GGD meetings, in 2003 more than 220 firearms and $200,000 in cash were seized and more than 1,300 felony and misdemeanor arrests for gun, gang, and drug charges were made.

In addition to the GGD meetings, there is a firearm case screening team and a firearm tracing project. Incident and indictment reviews are routinely conducted, and juvenile offender notification meetings are used to communicate with youth. Warrant sweeps and directed patrols also are actively used as enforcement, while law enforcement and prosecution training have complemented and enhanced suppression strategies. Strong Weed and Seed and Boys & Girls Club involvement, heightened awareness by means of a media campaign, and distribution of gunlocks through Project ChildSafe[18] have attempted to strengthen prevention, awareness, and community engagement in the district.

Research findings have played a pivotal role in the decisionmaking process. Although the evaluation is ongoing, some evidence suggests that PSN is having an impact on gun violence in Omaha. Indeed, the number of federal gun indictments has increased over 200 percent from 2001 to 2003. From 2003 to 2004, there were 92 fewer shots-fired calls to OPD (2003: 1690; 2004: 1598), 8 fewer assaults with a gun (2003: 312; 2004: 304), and 8 fewer homicides with a gun (2003: 23; 2004: 15).

Northern District of Illinois—Chicago

The Northern District of Illinois (NDIL) covers 18 counties across the northern third of the state, with a population of more than 9.1 million people, or 72 percent of the state's total population. NDIL includes Cook County, Illinois's largest county, with an estimated population of 5.35 million people. Cook County includes the City of Chicago, with a population of approximately 3 million residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). The city is served by the Chicago Police Department (CPD)—which has divided the city into 6 areas, 25 police districts, and 280 police beats)—and has roughly 13,500 sworn police officers. In 2004, CPD reported 36,787 violent crimes (1,282.2 per 100,000 population), including 448 murders (15.6 per 100,000 population), 15,912 robberies (554.6 per 100,000 population), and 18,746 aggravated assaults, aggravated batteries, attempted murders, and ritual mutilations (653.3 per 100,000 population). More than 40,000 state and federal criminal convictions are made and over 100,000 firearms recovered per year in Cook County.

Chicago has a long history of gangs that have significantly contributed to the city's crime and violence problems. There are more than 130 gangs with over 70,000 members who are believed to account for about 50 percent of the city's crime. In 2003 and 2004, more than 75 percent of murders in the city involved guns. Internal gang wars and open-air drug markets, both of which tend to involve gun violence, are daily issues within certain areas of Chicago. Local criminal justice offices report that, in general, African-American gangs primarily control and fight over drugs and "dope spots," whereas Hispanic gangs tend to fight over territory and feeling disrespected.

One key component of the local gang problem in Chicago is illegal firearm trafficking. It is illegal to purchase or possess a handgun in the City of Chicago, and gangs play a key role in moving illegal guns into the city for their members. Analysis of ATF firearm trafficking data suggest that Chicago's restrictive gun laws make it distinct from other Midwestern cities such as St. Louis, MO (Eastern District of Missouri), which also has a large gang influence but suffers from less severe gang firearm trafficking problems.

Another emerging component of gang violence, as reported by law enforcement and prosecutors, is the struggle for power and control between older gang members (OGs) who are exiting prison and trying to regain status and young, street-gang members. OGs fight with young gang members over dope spots. It is perceived that the younger members tend to be "shooters" and more willing to settle disputes with illegal firearms as the sole means of conflict resolution.

Coupled with the conflicts between OGs and young gang members and the reported recent phenomenon of strife within gangs, CPD has seen an increase in violent gang conflicts. Today's gangs are unlike the well-organized gangs of the 1980s or even gangs 10 years ago. CPD

estimates 100 factions[19] within the Gangster Disciples, one of the largest gangs in Chicago with more than 25,000 members in the city and 100,000 nationwide.

The gangs/guns/drugs nexus has profoundly affected the City of Chicago, forcing CPD to alter its structure and operations. In June 2000, an overhaul of its Narcotics Unit took place to incorporate not only narcotics investigations, but also gang activity and firearm offenses and tracking. Changes to the standard operating procedures, as well as a November 2005 Special Order with directives on addressing gang and gun violence, including reactive and proactive procedures, have altered the manner for addressing gang violence. The Special Order specifies that a monthly gang strategy meeting attended by federal law enforcement, CPD officers, and state and federal prosecution be held to identify the 20 most violent offenders. Such individuals are to be proactively sought after and are the subject of daily deployment sheets.

The Deployment Operations Center at CPD Headquarters circulates daily crime statistics to deputy chiefs who oversee one of the six areas and district commanders who oversee one of the 25 districts. In addition, each district commander is responsible for the daily tracking of his or her own district's crime statistics, which in turn determines the need for and placement of law enforcement resources.

Geographic areas (e.g., a neighborhood or a block) in Level 1 (or "blue zones") operate with normal law enforcement presence; however, geographic areas in Level 2 ("red zones") operate with heightened law enforcement resources. Headquarters determines whether an area is Level 1 or Level 2 after reviewing the daily crime statistics. There can be only one Level 2 designation per CPD area per day. Deputy chiefs with Level 2-designated geographic areas have access to all resources necessary to curb the imminent problem and can "borrow" resources from surrounding Level 1 areas. Heightened resources can include Operation Just Cause, employed when a juvenile 14 years of age or younger is shot or when a police officer is shot or shot at; placement of the Targeted Response Unit, a unit available to stay at the scene and surrounding areas for weeks with more than 100 officers present; and use of Area Narcotics Teams, Special Operations Sections, Saturation Teams, Gun Teams, and tactical and plain clothes officers. While deputy chiefs and district commanders appreciate the resources available to them under a Level 2 situation, they also are held accountable to answer questions such as, "Why are these problems occurring in your area?" and "What are you doing to improve the situation?"

CPD maintains a gang database for intelligence purposes. Individuals enter the database with one criminal arrest and noted gang affiliations (e.g., tattoos, associations, or self-admitted involvement). Once an individual is in the database, information from sources such as officer field contact cards and arrests can be added to an existing record.

An individual is automatically removed from the database after 6 months of inactivity. Information in the database is used to proactively target gangs and gang members. CPD has used intelligence information from the database to get authorization to conduct wiretaps and listen to telephone calls at the state prisons to build a case against one or more gang members. Information in the database also can assist prosecution by providing evidence for motive and retaliatory actions. For example, in May 2005, prosecutors filed a 126-page criminal complaint against 34 alleged gang members. Intercepted telephone conversations helped support the complaint and featured gang members expressing their concerns about holding onto their drug turf with PSN in place.

An RP from the University of Chicago serves as a fully integrated PSN task force member and has provided a statistically sound analysis of Chicago's gun violence problem. The RP identified 24 police beats on the west side of Chicago with the highest concentration of homicides (76 per 100,000 population and a gang-related homicide rate of 14 per 100,000, three times the city average) and gun recoveries (621 per 100,000 population). This area, the birthplace and continued stronghold of the African-American gang the Almighty Vice Lord Nation is 97-percent African-American, and the percentage of its population experiencing poverty (35 percent), receiving public assistance (17 percent), and maintaining single-mother households (24 percent) is twice that of the rest of the city.

Once the problem areas were identified, strategy selection followed. The result was a "layering" approach toward gun violence reduction that places primary emphasis on community-level intervention and prevention programs. The second and third layers are enforcement and prosecution respectively, and include increased federal prosecution for gun crime offenses, increased sentence lengths, offender notification meetings, and street enforcement aimed at the supply of illegal guns.

The offender notification meetings, known as PSN Offender Notification Forums, are emerging as a key component of NDIL's community strategy. Hosted by the PSN task force and held twice a month in the "hot zones," probationers and parolees with a history of gun violence and gang affiliations receive a message about consequences of firearm re-offenses and the choice to lead a productive, crime-free life. Ninety-eight percent of the parolees attended the forum, even though it was not mandatory. After extensive examination of the forums, the RP surmised (Papachristos et al., 2005):

> "Consistent with our hypotheses and the working assumptions of the PSN task force, multi-level analysis suggests that four of the five substantive predictors as well as the index of components are negatively associated with the homicide rate. Individually, the percentage of gun offenders in a beat who have attended a PSN

> forum appears to have the largest effect of all the PSN indicators, particularly on gang-related homicides."

Although preliminary, results of re-offending among individuals attending a forum have been positive, and the RP continues to track these effects.

The RP also examined the impact of Gun Teams[20]—which investigate firearm trafficking, sales, and use; seize illegal guns; and serve warrants for pending firearm cases—and PSN efforts. In 2005, the Gun Teams seized 314 illegal firearms, executed 356 search warrants, conducted 7 major and 90 lesser investigations with federal agencies, made 63 felony weapons violations arrests, and made 578 total arrests for crimes such as murder, sexual assault, and armed robbery. The RP found that the number of illegal guns seized by ATF is negatively associated with the number of gun homicides. When translated into a per-gun recovery percentage, "the log gun homicide rate decreases by about 18 percent for every 100 guns recovered."[21] In other words, as illegal gun seizures increase, homicides decrease.

The third layer, prosecution, involves bi-weekly case reviews of *all* firearm cases in the city. Local, state, and federal prosecutors determine the best venue for prosecution using three criteria: (1) previous history of gun violence, (2) location within the target area, and (3) accompanying severe or aggravating circumstances. Cases that do not meet the three criteria for federal prosecution are prosecuted in state court. As of July 2006, more than 300 PSN cases have been prosecuted federally.

Violence, drug sales, and illegal firearm trafficking create incentives for gang members to continue their gang involvement. The PSN task force's goal is intervention and disruption of those activities to curb the problem. Research has provided an understanding of the local gun violence problem and lent credibility for strategy choices. The notable aspects of NDIL's PSN strategy include initial and ongoing data analysis of the problem, outcomes, and strategies; a USAO conviction rate of 98 percent; continued, aggressive law enforcement strategies; engaged community and prevention activities; and multi-agency participation devoid of turf issues. A continual decline in all violent crime categories, and specifically a 37 percent decrease in quarterly homicide rates in the PSN treatment areas, seem to be early indicators that PSN is having a positive impact on the violent crime rate in the City of Chicago.

Eastern District of Missouri—St. Louis

The City of St. Louis is Missouri's largest city and is located in the state's largest county (St. Louis County, with an approximate population of 1 million) and has a population of 350,705 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). The city has a violent crime rate of 2,058 per 100,000 (Federal

Bureau of Investigation, 2005). With over 1,400 police officers, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (SLMPD) services 61 square miles.

When asked to describe their gang problem, police officers in St. Louis report that gangs are trying to emulate gangs in Chicago and Los Angeles. In St. Louis, a street gang is defined as an ongoing organization or association of three or more persons, formal or informal, that meets the following criteria: (1) has common name or identifying sign or color and (2) has individually or collectively engaged in criminal activity. There is a lot of in-fighting among St. Louis gang members. It seems, too, that St. Louis is developing its own "homegrown" version of gangs, where gang members are naming their sects using names of streets in St. Louis. Gang members tend to be mostly African-American, and their activities are based on drugs and the money that can be made selling drugs. The number of Hispanic gangs also is growing, and police describe their activities as tending to focus more on turf issues rather than drugs and money. Gangs in St. Louis are more loosely structured than the ones from Chicago or Los Angeles, as local police cannot determine a clear hierarchy to dismantle.

Police and prosecutors in St. Louis have created a very detailed and organized system to deal with gang members that frequent the criminal justice system. SLMPD has a Gang Unit that is assigned to the Intelligence Division. This unit maintains a list of individuals that have been formally classified as gang members. To maintain the integrity and validity of this list, only the six trained and certified officers in the Gang Unit are authorized to add or remove someone from the gang list. To be added to the list of formal gang members, an individual must admit to membership in a street gang; however, if the subject does not admit to a gang affiliation, he or she must meet two of the following seven criteria before being added to the list:

- The subject has gang-type tattoos or wears or possesses clothing and/or paraphernalia that is only associated with a specific gang(s).
- The subject participates in (a) criminal acts with known gang member(s) or (b) gang-related crimes.
- Police records and/or observations confirm the subject's close association with known gang member(s).
- A reliable informant identifies the subject as a gang member.
- The subject has been observed displaying gang hand signs, writing gang graffiti, or possessing items bearing gang graffiti.
- The subject appears in photograph(s) that indicates affiliation.
- The subject identifies himself or herself as a gang member in jail/prison correspondence.

The Gang Unit takes great care in documenting the criteria. Currently, more than 5,000 documented gang members are in the City of St. Louis and its surrounding county. Each documented gang member is identified with a unique identification number. This number (e.g., Gang ID X000-0000) links the individual to a specific gang (i.e., X000-), as well as uniquely identifies the individual within his or her associated gang (i.e., -0000).

The Gang Unit and the Circuit Attorney's Office in St. Louis have made it a priority to stop the violence associated with gangs. They are not after the gangs themselves, but the violence that keeps the gangs together and operating. For example, both the Circuit Attorney's Office and Missouri Probation and Parole repeatedly witnessed gang members who were on probation or parole continue to associate with fellow gang members and subsequently re-offend at high rates. As a result, they created a program—Gang CPR (Community Partnership for Restoration)—to treat gang members who were on probation differently. Gang CPR is an intensive form of probation that forbids probationers from associating with known gang members or visiting specified geographical areas. This type of probation has been seen as a "way-out" for gang members—that is, a legal excuse to discontinue gang membership.

SLMPD and the Circuit Attorney's Office met with the judges to educate them about the program and to enlist their support. They explained the gang member classification system used by the SLMPD and why the judges could rely on its accuracy and integrity. In addition, the court knows it is dealing with a gang member and is normally intolerant of probation violations for those probationers in the Gang CPR program.

The Circuit Attorney's Office maintains and Probation and Parole checks the list of probationers participating in the Gang CPR program. Each time a new probationer is added, the list is disseminated to SLMPD's Gang Unit and other law enforcement agencies (a minimum of one time per month). The Gang Unit then enters the new Gang CPR probationer into the Regional Justice Information System (REJIS) system so that when a police officer runs a check on that probationer, the police officer is notified of the probationer's status and advised to contact SLMPD's Gang Unit and inform it of the current situation.

Feedback to the Gang Unit is an important part of the Gang CPR program. The Circuit Attorney's Office sends a list to SLMPD's Gang Unit every month to update the unit on Gang CPR probationers who have either pleaded guilty or been convicted of a crime. This list includes identifying information about the gang member, his or her original charges, gang affiliation, and the disposition and or conditions in the case.

Western District of New York—Rochester

With a population of more than 212,000, the City of Rochester covers 37 square miles (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). In a city with approximately 6,000 people per square mile, the violent crime rate is 827 per 100,000 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2005). The Rochester Police Department (RPD), located in the Western District of New York, has 673 full-time, sworn officers.

These officers describe gangs in their beats as "homegrown." While some of these gangs try to emulate the Bloods and Crips from larger cities, they are much more fluid and less organized than those gangs. Gangs in Rochester are primarily drug-based gangs composed of friends who grew up together and became involved in illegal drugs together. Nearly all of the gangs are involved in the drug market, but not all sellers are necessarily part of a gang. Much of the violence associated with gang membership is related to "respect" issues.

Like many police departments, RPD has experienced uneven progress in forming and staffing a gang unit. What is unique about Rochester, however, is that it has made research and analysis an ongoing part of its efforts to combat gangs and the violence associated with them. For example, RPD contracted with a university-based crime analyst and recently hired and assigned him full time to RPD's Narcotics Unit to perform intelligence research and analysis on gangs as a regular part of his duties.

Gang intelligence has been incorporated into daily strategic reviews in which police and other criminal justice leaders plan the deployment of resources based on recent crime patterns. The gang database also is critical to managing other efforts, including Project Ceasefire and the Violence Enforcement Strategy Team (VEST). Rochester's Project Ceasefire involves intensive enforcement efforts against gangs involved in violence, especially homicide. The heavy enforcement and subsequent sanctions provide the content of a deterrence message delivered to members of other gangs through face-to-face call-ins with officials from across the criminal justice system. Thus far, Project Ceasefire has provided a mechanism for substantially dismantling five youth gangs in Rochester. Project Ceasefire is complemented by the efforts of VEST, a proactive enforcement effort aimed at the city's top 100 violent offenders, many of whom are affiliated with local gangs. Over a 2½-month period, 40 offenders from the VEST list received sentences and were incarcerated. The connection between gangs and gun violence, coupled with the intelligence now being routinely developed on gangs in Rochester, has created a new momentum for PSN to focus task force efforts on gangs believed to be driving much of the city's gun crime.

Summary

The 1980s through early 1990s produced an unprecedented increase in gangs, gun assaults, and youth homicides. These increases spurred federal and local governments to action, including the implementation of the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative throughout the nation. Still, gangs have again surfaced as common sources for gun violence in many communities, a fact documented by the National Youth Gang Center's recent surveys.

In the search for appropriate responses to these problems, suppression has been the strategy most likely to be adopted. This makes sense for a variety of reasons: law enforcement are a visible and generally appropriate resource in the effort to combat crime and are ready to implement strategies with relatively short notice. However, gang researchers have argued that enforcement responses are less likely to be successful if isolated from other strategies. It is important that prevention and intervention activities occur in conjunction with suppression, despite the well-documented challenges in implementing and maintaining such efforts.

In the last decade, a number of federal initiatives have been developed to emphasize suppression or social opportunities provision. COPS's Anti-Gang Initiative is a good example of a program that was based almost exclusively on suppression. This is counter-balanced by HHS's Youth Gang Drug Prevention Program, which focused exclusively on social opportunities. While the evaluation data do not enable a definitive conclusion about the effectiveness of these interventions, they have not made substantial inroads into the gang problem in the communities where they were funded. If there is a single message from this review of prior gang intervention strategies, it is that law enforcement and social opportunities provision must work hand-in-hand if successful interventions are to be implemented.

In spring 2006, U.S. Attorney General Gonzales announced that PSN would be expanded to include an anti-gang focus. Funding was provided to PSN task forces throughout the country to support new and enhanced anti-gang efforts. Additional funding was provided to six PSN task forces (Cleveland, OH; Dallas-Fort Worth, TX; Los Angeles, CA; Milwaukee, WI; Tampa, FL; and the "222 Corridor" that stretches from Easton to Lancaster, PA, near Philadelphia) to support comprehensive anti-gang interventions (Prepared remarks of U.S. Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales, 2006). The PSN Anti-Gang Initiative places emphasis on suppression, prevention, and reentry, consistent with prior experience and the research in this case study.

The success of any initiative, as demonstrated by the Boston Gun Project—as well as by promising PSN interventions such as those in Chicago, IL and Lowell, MA—hinges largely on its ability to integrate a number of problem-solving approaches. As the work of Klein and

Maxson (e.g., Klein, 1998; Klein, Maxson, and Miller, 1995) has demonstrated, gangs are not a monolith. Klein and Maxson produced a typology of gang structures, based on the size of the gang, history of the gang, its involvement in crime, and other salient characteristics. Their typology reinforces the diversity of gangs and, consequently, the need for a variety of responses. The key to a successful response to gangs is the recognition that gangs vary by type—within and between cities—and that successful responses must be built on a solid knowledge base. Without multiple sources of information and a coordinated response that involves both suppression and social opportunities provision, little progress will be made in responding to gangs. This background understanding shapes the proposed approach detailed above, as well as gang intervention strategies emerging in a number of PSN sites. The fact that some PSN task forces, including the sites reviewed in this report, identified research-based problem analysis tailored to the local jurisdiction and suppression and prevention strategies, is encouraging.

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Endnotes

1. Bureau of Justice Statistics: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjc/cvict_c.htm (as of 12/28/04).

2. Levels of property crime and violent crime not involving a gun are lower in the United States than many other western democracies, but gun crime remains exceptionally high in the United States. See Zimring and Hawkins, 1999; Bureau of Justice Statistics: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/ijs.htm (as of 12/28/04).

3. Reviews of promising gun crime reduction strategies that can assist research partners and task forces include Braga, 2004; National Research Council, 2005; Ludwig and Cook, 2003; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999. See also Dalton, 2003; Decker, 2003.

4. These data were reported by the U.S. Department of Justice, Executive Office for United States Attorneys (10/05).

5. Data compiled by Professor Joe Trotter and colleagues as part of American University's PSN Technical Assistance Program.

6. Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2004. See also www.psn.gov.

7. Maxson, Hannigan, and Sloane (2003) also reported that gang members appeared confused and unaware of what was happening to them when served with injunctions. Assessing impact was made difficult when the grant that had funded implementation of the injunction ended before it could be fully enforced.

8. An additional OJJDP anti-gang initiative is the Gang-Free Schools and Communities Program. Visit OJJDP's web site for more information (ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/programs/index.html).

9. The Gang Resistance Education And Training Program (G.R.E.A.T.) was developed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and is a school-based curriculum delivered by local law enforcement to prevent youth violence and gang membership (see www.great-online.org).

10. The implementation of PSN has renewed commitment to problem-solving responses to firearm-related crime in Boston.

11. On February 15, 2006, U.S. Attorney General Gonzales announced an expansion of PSN to include new and enhanced anti-gang efforts.

12. Data for the section about the Eastern District of California were provided by Anthony Braga.

13. For comparison purposes, the homicide rates for Bakersfield, Fresno, and Sacramento were 13.2, 14.7, and 13.2, respectively.

14. The District of Massachusetts is served by a research team led by Jack McDevitt at Northeastern University and Anthony Braga from Harvard University. Both McDevitt and Braga have been involved for a number of years in strategic approaches to crime reduction coordinated through the U.S. Attorney's Office.

15. Data are from McDevitt et al., 2006.

16. For a discussion of offender notification meetings, see McDevitt et al., 2006.

17. PSN in Nebraska also developed a second target area in Lincoln, which focused on domestic violence and higher-crime target neighborhoods, and reached out to the rest of the state with a commitment to prosecute appropriate gun crime cases in federal court.

18. For more information on Project ChildSafe, visit www.projectchildsafe.org.

19. Factions are small groups of a larger gang operating under the auspices of the gang, but potentially with their own interest in the forefront.

20. Gun Teams are composed of representatives from CPD, ATF, the City of Chicago's Department of Drug and Gang Enforcement, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, and the USAO. Originally only a PSN enforcement strategy, Gun Teams are now citywide.

21. The "log gun" rate refers to a logarithmic transformation of the data to allow for statistical analysis.