



**National Network
For Safe Communities**
Saving Lives, Saving Communities



Group Violence Intervention

An Implementation Guide



COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

Group Violence Intervention

An Implentation Guide

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Contents

Letter from the Director	vii
Letter from the National Network	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
About This Series	xiii
Introduction	1
GVI Overview	3
Frequently Asked Questions	3
Glossary	6
Initial Planning	9
Key Commitments	9
Executive committee	9
Technical assistance and research support	10
Working Group	12
Law enforcement representatives	12
Social service representatives	13
Community moral voices	14
Communications Strategy	15
Sustainability	16
Problem Analysis	17
Overview: Assessing Your Violence Problem	18
Part 1 Steps	21
1. Group audit	21
Preparation	21
Space/setup	21
Conducting the group audit	22
Data organization and analysis	23

2. Incident review	24
Purpose	24
Preparation	24
Space/setup	26
Conducting the incident review	26
3. Executive summary and feedback to Working Group	27
4. Identifying group members	28
5. Performance measures	30
Part 2 Steps	31
1. Criminal history review	31
2. Social network analysis	32
Demonstration Enforcement Action	35
Steps of a Demonstration Enforcement Action	35
Ideas behind Demonstration Enforcement Actions	36
Community Moral Voices	39
Why Community Moral Voices Matter	39
Informal social control	39
Legitimacy	40
Norms, narratives, and police-community reconciliation	42
Engaging the Community's Moral Voice	48
Identify potential moral voices	48
Select speakers for the call-in	49
Social Services	53
Why Offering Social Services Matters	53
Organizing the Social Service Structure	54
1. Identify providers	54
2. Bring providers into the strategy	54
3. Identify a lead provider	55
4. Ensure fast response times	55
5. Develop tracking database	55

Call-In Preparation and Execution	57
What Is a Call-In?	57
Law Enforcement Preparation	58
1. Identify members of violent groups	58
2. Determine community supervision status of group members	58
3. Include member(s) from each group at the call-in(s)	58
Call-In Security and Logistics	59
Speaker Preparation	60
Talking points for law enforcement	60
Talking points for social service providers	63
Talking points for community moral voices	64
Call-In Audience	65
Directing Group Members to Appear	65
Letter content	66
Best practices for letter delivery	66
Call-In Rehearsal	68
Checklist for a successful call-in	69
Call-In Execution	70
Speaking order	70
Visual aids	71
Moderator's role	71
Maintenance and Ensuring Program Integrity	73
Recap and Planning with the Working Group	73
Ongoing Data Analysis	74
Follow-Through on Call-In Promises	74
Law enforcement	74
Social services	77
Community moral voices	78

Ongoing Communication.....	79
Traditional call-ins.....	79
Custom notifications	80
Sustainability and Accountability	83
Performance Management	83
Intelligence maintenance systems	83
Partnership management	85
Governing Structures.....	85
Conclusion	87
Appendices	89
A. GVI Flow Chart and Timeline.....	89
B. Group Audit Tools.....	90
1. Pre-session checklist	90
2. Sample schedule for group audit	91
3. Sample group audit instrument	92
4. Group audit data organization.....	94
5. Social network analysis example	96
C. Sample Call-In / Rehearsal Agenda	99
D. The Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence “Call-In”: Reflections on a Profound Experience.....	100
E. Sample Press Releases.....	104
1. After the first call-in	104
2. After the second (or subsequent) call-in(s)	106
F. GVI Effectiveness: What the Research Says	108
G. National Network for Safe Communities	111
Bibliography	112
About the National Network for Safe Communities	115
About the COPS Office	117

Letter from the Director

Dear colleagues,

The COPS Office has long been a strong supporter of the National Network for Safe Communities and its Group Violence Intervention (GVI). When we in law enforcement talk about addressing urban violence, the problem is so large in scope and self-reinforcing in nature that finding a solution can seem overwhelming, if not nearly impossible. The root causes of crime and disorder in our disadvantaged communities involve so many systemic dysfunctions that it becomes hard to imagine how law enforcement can begin to stem the tide of group and gang violence.

The beauty of GVI, therefore, is that it has never been designed to address the myriad social problems that both create and are created by the cycle of violence in these neighborhoods. Rather, it is singularly focused on an immediate and achievable goal: the cessation of gun violence that destabilizes communities, creates fear in our citizens, and claims the lives of many of our young people of color.

In this publication, we have attempted to lay out step by step the components of the GVI process so that those jurisdictions that would like to implement this strategy in their neighborhoods can do so with clear guidance and information. To be sure, this work is not easy; it requires buy-in and hands-on cooperation from stakeholders across the community and the criminal justice system. However, when properly implemented, GVI can be transformative. I am not overpromising when I say it can and does help communities take control of their streets so that law and order is restored by the neighborhood itself—a much more effective way of creating public safety than through enforcement actions alone.

The COPS Office is steadfastly committed to reducing group- and gang-related violence, which disproportionately affects our most vulnerable communities. Our hope is that this publication will help jurisdictions to learn about this strategy, which has often been misunderstood, and use it to guide them in implementing GVI in their own neighborhoods.

Sincerely,



Joshua A. Ederheimer, Acting Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Letter from the National Network

Dear colleagues,

The approach described in this guide has been in development for nearly 20 years and has grown to include a body of work under the National Network for Safe Communities that focuses on reducing violence and improving public safety, minimizing arrest and incarceration, strengthening communities, and improving relationships between law enforcement and the communities it serves. The original “Operation Ceasefire” in Boston showed that cities could, in fact, do something about homicide and serious violence. Moreover, national experience has now shown that communities can effectively address many other serious problems when they operate along a common set of guiding principles:

- ✦ First, do no harm
- ✦ Strengthen communities’ capacity to prevent violence
- ✦ Enhance legitimacy
- ✦ Offer help to those who want it
- ✦ Get deterrence right
- ✦ Use enforcement strategically

Following these principles, the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) has produced powerful and measurable results. It is, at its core, a straightforward approach: identify the groups that drive the violence and form a partnership among law enforcement, communities, and social service providers that communicates a united message to members of those targeted groups: “You matter. You are important. We want you to survive and flourish. Some of what you’re doing is wrong. We will help you if you let us, and we will stop you if you make us.”

As this guide illustrates, GVI involves various moving parts, each one of which matters and all of which are a challenge to get and keep right. This strategy is worth getting right—it saves lives; keeps people out of prison; strengthens communities; resets relationships; and makes possible the longer, deeper work our most vulnerable communities need and deserve.

Since the original “Operation Ceasefire,” the GVI strategy has evolved in many ways, but two are most important. One way has been in coming to understand the extraordinary power of what we call “the moral voice of the community”—the pragmatic, concrete impact of crystal-clear community norms and standards focused on the small core population that most needs to

hear and heed them. Angry, damaged, and endangered street offenders are not much inclined to listen to police officers and mayors. Yet they are willing to listen to mothers; older, wiser offenders; community elders; and a host of others with a real standing in their world. We are not accustomed, in our standard approaches, to make organizing these moral voices as concrete a task as launching a drug raid or running a jobs program. However, we now know that it can, in fact, be done.

The second way has been in coming to understand the extraordinary damage done by the toxic narratives that dominate the understandings between our most vulnerable communities and law enforcement. A community that sees the police as a race predator cannot make common cause with the law. Police that see the communities they serve as corrupt cannot make common cause with the people they serve. These conflicts are real. But the worst narratives are not true, and when we interrupt them, they can be acknowledged, addressed, and changed. That change reveals an overwhelming common interest in the fundamental safety and wellbeing of the community and prepares the groundwork for enormously powerful and effective partnerships.

This is work worth doing, and worth doing well. Experience shows that when the strategy is implemented with reasonable fidelity to its core principles—it does not have to be perfect, but it does have to be true to its central ideas—the strategy can produce dramatic results.

A growing national community of practice has contributed to this guide. It welcomes you and is eager to help you. If you would like any such help, please get in touch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David M. Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the last name.

David M. Kennedy
National Network for Safe Communities

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With permission, this guide draws substantially on writings by David M. Kennedy, chair of the National Network for Safe Communities.

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About This Series

The National Network for Safe Communities has assembled guides to support communities implementing its proven strategies. The Group Violence Intervention reduces violent crime by joining together community members with law enforcement and social service providers to deliver an anti-violence message to highly active street groups. The Drug Market Intervention eliminates overt drug markets by bringing

together community leaders, law enforcement, and service providers with street-level dealers and their families to make it clear that the dealing must stop.

The particulars of the strategies are adaptable. The National Network recommends that practitioners use these guides to ensure that all the elements are in place, tailoring their execution to the local resources and personnel available.

The National Network supports these and other strategies that rely on partnerships between law enforcement and communities to reduce violence and improve public safety, minimize arrest and incarceration, strengthen communities, and improve relationships between law enforcement and communities it serves. These guides offer

comprehensive tools to practitioners—be they community members, law enforcement, or government officials—who seek to introduce proven strategies to their communities, build a partnership of stakeholders, turn strategies into action plans, and sustain their results.

Each guide presents the important elements of a strategy and recommends a general path along which communities should proceed. However, the particulars of the strategies are adaptable. The National Network recommends that practitioners use these guides to ensure that all the elements are in place, tailoring their execution to the local resources and personnel available.

Introduction

The National Network for Safe Communities' Group Violence Intervention (GVI), first implemented as "Operation Ceasefire" in Boston in the mid-1990s, has repeatedly demonstrated that violence can be dramatically reduced when a partnership of community members, law enforcement, and social service providers directly engages with the small and active number of people involved in street groups and clearly communicates

- ✦ a moral message from community representatives that violence will not be tolerated;
- ✦ a law enforcement message that any future violence will be met with clear, predictable, and certain consequences;
- ✦ an offer of help from social service providers for those who want it.

GVI now represents a proved approach through which law enforcement, communities, and offenders can work together, reset relationships, and recognize and expand upon common norms, interests, and goals. Built on the schools of thought and practice known as "focused deterrence" and "procedural justice," the strategy brings together communities and law enforcement to acknowledge that

- ✦ traditional methods have not produced adequate public safety, and have produced unintended harms;
- ✦ very small numbers of offenders in the most dangerous neighborhoods drive violence, and traditional notions of "dangerous neighborhoods" are fundamentally mistaken;
- ✦ nearly all people in such neighborhoods—offenders included—want to be safe and have productive relationships with law enforcement;
- ✦ ideas that offenders are irrational and vicious are fundamentally wrong;
- ✦ offenders should be offered and will often accept help;

- ✦ ideas that police and law enforcement devalue these communities and believe that the citizens residing in them are fundamentally wrong;
- ✦ profligate and disrespectful law enforcement methods should be replaced by precise and respectful methods.

In practice, the strategy follows a basic logic. Evidence and experience show that a small number of people in street groups—gangs, drug crews, and the like—drive the majority of violence in troubled neighborhoods. Group members typically constitute less than 0.5 percent of a city’s population but are consistently linked to 60 to 70 percent of the shootings and homicides. The internal dynamics of the groups and the honor code of the street drive violence between those groups and individuals.

A note on why the National Network for Safe Communities uses the term “group” instead of “gang”

All gangs are groups, but not all groups are gangs. An exclusive focus on gangs, which is often understood to include notions like organization and leadership, will exclude a significant number of groups that contribute heavily to serious violence, such as loose neighborhood drug crews. The National Network’s experience shows that worrying about whether a particular city has gangs, or whether a particular group is a gang, is an unnecessary distraction. The simple fact is that many high-rate offenders associate in groups and that these groups drive serious violence. Many (and often most) such groups will not fit the statutory definition of a gang. Nor will they meet even the common perception of what constitutes a gang. Such groups may or may not have a name, common symbols, signs or tags, an identifiable hierarchy, or other shared identifiers. For these reasons, this implementation guide uses the term group rather than gang throughout.

GVI Overview

- ☐ Frequently Asked Questions
- ☐ Glossary

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the National Network's Group Violence Intervention?

The National Network's Group Violence Intervention (GVI), first demonstrated as Operation Ceasefire in Boston in 1996 and subsequently in many other communities, relies on direct communication with violent groups by a partnership of law enforcement, social service providers, and community figures. Together the partnership delivers a unified antiviolence message, explains that violence will bring law enforcement attention to entire groups, offers services and alternatives to group members, and articulates community norms against violence. When GVI is properly implemented, rapid reductions in serious violence are routine. The strategy is flexible and can be adapted to any community. Different cities use different terms for GVI and effectively tailor it to local conditions, as long as cities preserve GVI's core principles.

Why does GVI focus on groups?

Readily identifiable groups of individuals commit the majority of homicides, shootings, and other acts of extreme violence. Street groups are also dramatically overrepresented as victims. For example, recent research with frontline officers in Cincinnati, Ohio, identified 60 criminal groups composed of 1,500 individuals (less than 0.5 percent of the city's population) who were associated with 75 percent of homicides in the city—as victim, perpetrator, or both.¹ Research in Newark, New Jersey, shows that 88 groups composed of 1,470 individuals were responsible for 57 percent of homicides in 2009–2010.² Similar ratios have been found in scores of communities, large and small, across the country.

1. R.S. Engel et al., *Implementation of the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV): Year 2 Report* (University of Cincinnati Policing Institute, 2009), www.nnscommunities.org/pdf/CIRV_2NDYEAR_REPORT.pdf.

2. Anthony Braga, Rutgers School of Criminal Justice, e-mail communication, 2012. These data are based on the problem analysis Newark, New Jersey, conducted in 2012.

What is the difference between GVI (the Boston Ceasefire model) and Chicago CeaseFire (also known as Cure Violence)?

Both approaches use street outreach workers to engage with group members in an attempt to prevent retaliatory violence and offer services and alternatives to street life. However, Chicago CeaseFire relies primarily on outreach, social services, and community antiviolence events and demonstrations. The National Network's Group Violence Intervention involves three sets of actors: law enforcement, community representatives, and social service providers. The strategy requires all three to collaborate closely and focus their efforts on the very small group of actors most likely to be perpetrators or victims of violence. Chicago CeaseFire, for a range of reasons, includes a less direct role for law enforcement. The National Network, on the other hand, makes law enforcement-community partnership a central component of GVI.

What is the difference between GVI and the Comprehensive Gang Model?

Both approaches use a combination of law enforcement, community engagement, and service provision in an effort to stem group-related violence. However, the Comprehensive Gang Model, developed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, employs an array of strategies, including broad social intervention, opportunities provision, suppression, community mobilization, and organizational change. In an effort to solve the root causes of gang violence, the model seeks to transform the social institutions that foster gangs, such as education and economic systems. GVI relies on a smaller, more easily assembled, and narrowly focused partnership of law enforcement, community representatives, and social service providers to engage in a specific way with violent groups.

What is a call-in?

A call-in is a GVI communication tool, a meeting during which a partnership of law enforcement representatives, influential community members, and social service providers speak directly to members of street groups (usually those on probation or parole). The GVI partners use the meeting to deliver the strategy's no-violence message to group members and, through them, back to their associates. During the call-in, the GVI partnership clearly communicates (1) a credible, moral message against violence; (2) a credible law enforcement message about the group consequences of further violence; and (3) a genuine offer of help for those who want it.

What is the impact of GVI?

The typical impact is a 35 to 60 percent reduction in community-wide levels of homicides and a significant but sometimes lesser reduction in nonfatal shootings citywide. Often GVI achieves larger reductions in a specific, highly victimized demographic. Boston, for example, showed a 63 percent reduction in the monthly number of youth homicides citywide. Indianapolis, Indiana; Chicago, Illinois; Lowell, Massachusetts; Stockton, California; and other cities have experienced similar reductions. The lowest rate of impact for GVI interventions appears to be around a one-third reduction in group member-involved homicides. Appendix H summarizes evaluation outcomes to date.

Why does GVI work?

The strategy has three key elements that address what really drives violence on the street, including the dynamics between and within groups:

1. It communicates to street groups the community's strong desire that the violence stop, and it tells group members that they are valued and the community wants them to succeed.
2. It creates certain, credible, group-wide consequences for homicides and shootings. Because groups drive violence, a group focus for legal consequences is more meaningful than an individual focus.
3. It offers help to group members who want to change.

Each element of the strategy is equally important. All the pieces work together and reinforce one another.

The strategy is high activity but low enforcement. GVI works by setting and maintaining clear standards via the partnership and ideally not by employing large numbers of arrests and enforcement actions. Community representatives get a chance to tell group members, in safe settings, that their behavior is intolerable, and often the group members listen attentively. As groups come to understand that violence by one may lead to attention to all, the peer pressure that drives the violence is reversed. Many group members who also find the violence intolerable and worry about their friends and loved ones take the “honorable exit” that clear standards provide. Some will also take the social services offered.

Glossary

The following is a list of key terms used in the strategy:

call-in. A key GVI communication tool, a meeting during which a partnership of law enforcement, community members, and social service providers delivers the no-violence message to group members and, through them, back to their associates. The strategy can entail other methods of notification, but the call-in is its traditional communication mechanism. The partnership usually holds a call-in in a place of civic importance, and it ideally lasts about one hour. The term “notification” is also often used to describe direct communications between the partnership and group members.

community moral voice. (1) The collective standards of a community affected by violence that are articulated through individuals with moral standing and credibility in the eyes of group members. (2) The selected individuals who, by the virtue of their moral standing, articulate the community’s standards, aspirations, frustrations, and expectations and who, by the virtue of their life experiences, have the respect of group members. During call-ins, community moral voices speak directly to group members to clarify and reinforce community standards. This includes openly addressing street and community norms that can drive violence.

enforcement action. Coordinated law enforcement action against members of a violent group, performed by the law enforcement operational team (i.e., local, state, and federal agencies) of the GVI partnership. Sanctions include performing full conspiracy investigations, vigorously enforcing the conditions of group members' probation or parole, serving outstanding arrest warrants, performing drug buys and arrests, serving warrants for outstanding child support, checking group members for unregistered cars, and performing housing code enforcements. When law enforcement performs this action for the first time in a jurisdiction prior to a call-in, it is called a **demonstration enforcement action**. Performed upon a jurisdiction's most violent group, it demonstrates to other groups that the partnership is serious about ending violence.

group audit/group mapping. The process of identifying all violent groups in a jurisdiction, their areas of operation, and their alliances and conflicts, and estimating the number of their members. This is most often done by convening and debriefing experienced frontline officers and other street-knowledgeable practitioners, such as field parole/probation personnel. In some leading National Network cities, the process involves social network analysis. See also **social network analysis**.

incident review. The process of reviewing a jurisdiction's violent crime incidents for group member involvement, motive, connection to prior and subsequent violence, and similar key aspects. This is most often done by convening and debriefing experienced frontline officers and other street-knowledgeable practitioners, such as field parole/probation personnel.

influential. A person known to have a positive influence in a group member's life.

project manager. The person who facilitates GVI implementation at the local level, taking the lead for the professional and administrative work; coordinating and assisting law enforcement, community, and social service partners; and acting as liaison to governmental agencies and funders.

social network analysis. A mathematical method that identifies the structures of street groups through connections contained within the records of police department arrest, field stop, and other similar data.

street outreach workers. Men and women, often with their own history of group and street involvement, who can easily connect to and establish relationships with group members to prevent violence, broker social services, quell “beefs,” etc.

target offense. The violent offense selected by the GVI Working Group that will trigger an enforcement action against group members. Based on the results of its incident review, a jurisdiction will determine whether the target offense includes homicides only or also other kinds of violence, such as nonfatal gun assaults. See also **Working Group**.

Working Group. A small, stable membership of core representatives from law enforcement, the community, and social services, chaired by the project manager, who meet regularly and coordinate the actions of their respective operational teams. In many cases, the core law enforcement representatives form the initial Working Group, and as implementation develops, community and social service representatives join the group.

Initial Planning

- ☐ **Key Commitments**
 - Executive committee
 - Project manager
 - Technical assistance and research support
- ☐ **Working Group**
 - Law enforcement representatives
 - Social service representatives
 - Community moral voices
- ☐ **Communications Strategy**
- ☐ **Sustainability**

Launching the GVI effort can unfold differently in different places. Law enforcement buy-in is instrumental to the initial planning, and in many cities, city officials or law enforcement initiate the effort by reaching out to community members and social services. In other cities, GVI grows out of community efforts that bring the other partner agencies into the fold.

Key Commitments

Communities new to GVI must make a clear, public commitment that the city will implement the approach as a primary operational response to group violence. City leadership should commit to the basic operational elements of the strategy; to a governing structure to ensure accountability; and to the law enforcement, community, and social services responses the strategy requires to be effective and sustainable.

Executive committee

The National Network strongly recommends establishing an executive committee comprised of local leaders with high-level management experience. In conjunction with a project manager and a core Working Group (see page 26), this committee can help establish measures for the collective accountability and progress of the GVI effort.

Oversight option

Consider forming an executive committee of agency heads who meet every few months to discuss how the effort is going, to help obtain resources, and to open doors. The committee can make sure that if the project manager moves on, a suitable successor replaces him or her. Being on the committee also keeps the agency heads informed on the nature and operations of GVI.

— Anthony Braga, Ph.D., School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University

Project manager

New GVI communities should designate a senior-level project manager who will oversee and coordinate the overall effort. This person should have the following competencies:

- Project management experience
- Ability to work effectively with law enforcement, community, and social service constituencies
- Sufficient reputation and clout to manage agency and personality disagreements
- Ability to work effectively with local media

If the project manager is a career law enforcement officer with little experience working collaboratively with social service and community constituencies, designating a separate resource or community outreach coordinator may be helpful.

Technical assistance and research support

GVI benefits immensely from the support of an experienced technical assistance team. During the initial planning period, the National Network recommends that the community interested in launching GVI work with a technical assistance team that can explain, guide, and ensure fidelity in basic implementation. Technical advisers can also provide guidance on a governing structure for the GVI effort and analytical and research capacity.

Typically, advisers require some funding, which the following sources can often secure:

- Police or prosecutors' asset forfeiture funds
- Local foundations
- State agencies: e.g., a criminal justice coordinating board
- Federal sources: e.g., U.S. Department of Justice grant programs³

For more information on how to retain technical advisers, contact the National Network for Safe Communities at infonnsc@jjay.cuny.edu.

Local research support (e.g., universities) adds great value to the Working Group and the overall violence reduction effort. Ongoing research support that builds on the problem analysis is not essential to GVI, but it is strongly encouraged, especially during the initial implementation phase. The incident review and group audit, two key GVI research components, require law enforcement to analyze the data in a nontraditional manner. Local researchers can provide context for the overall violence problem and help embed the data analysis process within the law enforcement operational team.

The role of local research partners includes the following:

- Unpacking the core violence issues through the group audit and incident review, enabling a much more focused collective effort
- Collecting and analyzing performance data on law enforcement, social service, and community moral voice components of the strategy, enhancing performance management for the strategy
- Helping local law enforcement to update group member lists and analyze the connections between violent incidents and local groups regularly
- Performing applied social network analysis to support targeted group enforcement, selection of group members for notifications, moral engagement, and other applications
- Creating or supporting data collection to enable formal evaluation of the violence reduction effort

3. See "Grants," U.S. Department of Justice, www.justice.gov/business.

Picking the right structure

From the beginning of the strategy implementation, we wanted to make sure we had the right people in the Working Group. If we had too many, the group would be unmanageable. If we had too few, the people we added later would feel they had been left out. We wanted to have the necessary and sufficient number and type of members.

Locally headquartered multinational manufacturer Procter & Gamble lent its expertise and advised us on management, helping us establish the right teams within the Working Group and select key players.

— Robin Engel, Ph.D., University of Cincinnati

Working Group

The Working Group, chaired by the project manager, has a small and stable membership of core representatives from law enforcement, the community, and social services who can meet regularly and coordinate the actions of their respective operational teams. For best results, the Working Group should meet monthly with clear ground rules that require principals-only attendance and a closed-door, no-distractions working environment.

Law enforcement representatives

The law enforcement representatives of the Working Group typically include one or two senior officials from the police, the county sheriff, the local prosecutor, probation and parole, and the U.S. attorney's office. Federal agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives may have their own representatives on the Working Group or may be represented by the U.S. attorney's office.

Local law enforcement agencies sometimes have histories that create challenges for the type of collaboration the strategy requires. Someone knowledgeable about the GVI process may need to meet individually with the senior officials of each agency (1) to understand and address any concerns they may have about the substance of the strategy and about working with other local partners and (2) to present the basics of the strategy.

If the jurisdiction has access to a technical adviser, the presence of the adviser during these meetings will be helpful. Agency principals are typically interested in the following key issues:

- Background of GVI and evidence of its efficacy
- Steps to implementation
- Expectations of Working Group partners
- Mechanism for agency participation in the Working Group: e.g., point of contact, methods of communication, and operational commitments
- Timeline for local design and implementation

Social service representatives

Social service agencies play an essential role in GVI. Typically one or a few senior figures representing social services (and sometimes other related capacities, such as street outreach) join the Working Group. In some communities one agency can provide “one stop shopping” for the necessary services. In others, the Working Group representatives will need to assemble a coalition of providers.

In either case, the social service representatives of the Working Group will need to create a single access point to services and a plan for social service providers to offer outreach and support. For more information about working with social service providers, see “Social Services” on page 67.

➤ Tip from the field

Finding and channeling community moral voices

A community moral voice

- must be a natural voice, not invented or developed, only informed and given a platform;
- may be someone who has never spoken up before;
- can be anyone who believes it's wrong to have to live in chaos and fear;
- may embrace the strategy better if told that it focuses on groups that are statistically shown to be the most at risk of killing or getting killed;
- is best contacted by police or other partnership members discreetly (not at home);
- can remind call-in group members that most murders in their city are of people like them.

GVI is a potent delivery system for the community's moral voice.

— Jim Summey, Executive Director, High Point Community Against Violence

Community moral voices

As with social services, the Working Group typically includes a small number of key community representatives.

This element of the strategy has unfolded differently in various places. Many cities that have implemented GVI have engaged community representatives after the initial data gathering and problem analysis. By waiting until then, the Working Group can present the community with a clearer picture of the problem. In other places, community stakeholders have played the lead role in convening law enforcement and other partners and driving the process.

Once that process is underway, community representatives of the Working Group take the lead in identifying and working with community participants who will speak at the call-ins as “community moral voices” and provide guidance on any broader community outreach and organizing. This can include attention to explicit work on reconciliation between law enforcement and communities (see “Norms, narratives, and police-community reconciliation” on page 56).

For information about how to work with community members, see “Community Moral Voices” on page 53.

Accurate press in Salinas, California

Group enforcement actions should be shown as resulting directly from violent acts committed by street group members. Accurate press coverage can communicate that link clearly to group members, community members, and the public.

The article “Police Arrest Salinas Gang Members in Sweep after Boy’s Death”^{*} provides an example of good press coverage, as it describes a group enforcement action by the Working Group of Salinas, California, as part of a GVI implementation.

^{*} See “Police Arrest Salinas Gang Members in Sweep after Boy’s Death,” *The Herald*, March 26, 2010, www.montereyherald.com/ci_14762339?source=most_viewed&nclink_check=1.

Communications Strategy

GVI takes an unusual approach to reducing group violence, and as a result, media accounts sometimes misrepresent it. In particular, the media can portray GVI as excessively “hard” (e.g., “U.S. attorney threatens gang members with federal prison”) or excessively “soft” (e.g., “police chief offers gang members jobs”). Before holding the first call-in, the Working Group will want to engage with existing media contacts or develop a working relationship with a reporter or media outlet. This will facilitate the most accurate press coverage during the GVI implementation process.

Based on the experiences of different cities, the elements of an effective public communications strategy include the following:

- ✦ The Working Group reaches out to a trusted local reporter during the early stages and provides detailed information about the strategy and implementation process. The Working Group asks the reporter to delay coverage until an agreed-upon time, which is usually after the first call-in.
- ✦ Together with the executive committee, the Working Group prepares a press release to be issued after the first call-in. The press release ensures that one accurate account of the project and call-in is in circulation. Writing an op-ed piece on the strategy for a local newspaper may also be helpful.

- The Working Group notifies community members and the press about group enforcement actions, linking them explicitly to the GVI approach (for a sample press release, see Appendix E.2.).

Sustainability

Cities new to GVI should build sustainability measures into their effort from the beginning. After holding several call-ins and witnessing initial reductions in violence, the Working Group can focus specifically on sustaining the work long-term. For more information, see “Sustainability and Accountability” on page 97.

As long as collaborators from key organizations are willing to commit to GVI, the strategy generally does not benefit from a formal memorandum of understanding. GVI implementation is a fluid process, and the resources and actions that each group might be called on to supply are unpredictable. A commitment that specifies which resources must be contributed, which enforcement activities must be undertaken, or which services must be provided could feel like an intrusion on each agency’s discretion and may become rapidly outdated. If a city seeks a written agreement, the best type is a general agreement to participate in the process.

Problem Analysis

☐ Overview: Assessing Your Violence Problem

☐ Part 1 Steps

- Group audit
- Incident review
- Executive summary and feedback to Working Group
- Identifying group members
- Performance measures

☐ Part 2 Steps

- Criminal history review
- Social network analysis

Technical assistance and research partnership

GVI requires specialized research skills for the group audit, incident review, social network analysis, and other related research. The law enforcement team uses two major steps to look at violent crime data in a fresh way:

- **Group audit.** A current, accurate snapshot of active street groups, relationships, and members may not exist in any organized form. Local law enforcement may have a gang database, but GVI focuses on groups that may or may not be gangs. Thus, the gang database may be framed by state or national definitions and not focus on which groups are currently active.
- **Incident review.** The context behind violent incidents—details that are known though not germane to a prosecution—is often not in investigative or prosecutorial files. For example, the files might not capture the fact that numerous shootings have occurred between two groups and that this dynamic is responsible for a string of homicides that may seem, from the case files, to be unrelated.

In its initial stages, a GVI effort often includes a relationship between the Working Group and an outside advisor and/or a local university for research assistance. Over time, the sustained success of GVI requires that group data analysis and the incident review become internal to, and a standard operating procedure for, law enforcement.

Overview: Assessing Your Violence Problem

Design work for GVI begins by assessing the facts on the ground (i.e., who and what are driving serious violence) to design an operation that addresses the actual situation. An experienced technical assistance team can help immeasurably by working with the project manager and the law enforcement representatives of the Working Group to organize their initial research efforts.

While law enforcement has access to a wealth of information on current and historic crimes, the information is often captured in a way that is more useful for prosecution than for violence prevention. Information and current intelligence on the street scene are usually scattered among frontline personnel and not systematically collected. Therefore, getting a current snapshot of local group and violence dynamics is important.

The research uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative information. Quantitative information can be used to assess the location of target crimes and their concentration; demographic characteristics of victims, offenders, and communities; criminal histories of victims and offenders; weapon types, origins, and pathways to the street (through crime gun trace analysis); and similar matters. Qualitative information usually needs to be gathered through structured methods with frontline practitioners—such as police officers, probation and parole officers, and street outreach workers—to answer basic questions such as these:

- What is the context in which violent incidents occur?
- Are victims and offenders known to practitioners before violent events?
- Do victims and offenders participate in street groups, drug crews, or other kinds of highly active groups?
- How many such groups exist, where are they active, and what are their relationships with each other?
- Who are the individuals in these groups, and which of them are most violent or otherwise influential?

Once gathered, such information can guide policy formulation as well as GVI operations.

Tailoring for local conditions

In most cities, a disproportionate amount of violent crime is committed in a few places by a few people who are known to law enforcement. However, the particulars vary. The data gathering and problem analysis stage is where you diagnose the local problem (individuals, groups, and circumstances) and local resources and then customize the strategy. With a tailored approach, you can get the city to embrace GVI as a local strategy. You are not imposing the Boston approach in Baltimore, for example; you are just using the sample principles.

— Anthony Braga, Ph.D., School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University

The problem analysis consists of two parts. The steps in part one are essential research exercises that are necessary to begin the design of the strategy.

These steps are

- ✦ Group audit
- ✦ Incident review
- ✦ Executive summary and feedback to Working Group
- ✦ Identifying group members
- ✦ Performance measures

The steps in part two are valuable research exercises that can be added to the Working Group process when the group can perform them. These steps are

- ✦ Criminal history review
- ✦ Social network analysis

➤ Tip from the field

Value of researchers

It's important to partner with an outside research group. I wouldn't do this work without academic support. Researchers bring unique skills to the effort.

Our partnership with the University of Cincinnati was the most productive partnership I've had in 25 years of policing.

— Dan Gerard, Captain, Cincinnati (Ohio) Police Department

Researcher-police department collaboration technique

A research team working with a law enforcement agency on a GVI implementation typically cannot obtain the necessary criminal history data on its own—it needs the police to get the data. To solve that problem, we created a custom database template for the police to fill in. Once the police add the appropriate, allowed data, they give us the database and full access to it. The database also contains information on every call-in, every house visit, social service activity, etc.

If a police department plans to partner with a research team, the police need to find out and comply with the complex rules regarding information sharing.

— Robin Engel, Ph.D., University of Cincinnati

To prepare for the group audit and incident review, the project manager works with the law enforcement representatives of the Working Group to discuss the data needed and the personnel commitment required. This generally involves the following:

- ♦ **Personnel.** Data gathering requires that every district, unit, or area with high numbers of homicides, shootings, or violent incidents identify a selection of knowledgeable beat officers so that researchers can systematically, collectively interview them. This process typically takes one to two days, depending on the size of the jurisdiction. Generally, this process involves neighborhood patrol; the most knowledgeable detectives from homicide; and line officers from vice, gang, and other specialized units with connections to violent crime. Probation and parole officers who are similarly street-knowledgeable can also provide valuable information.
- ♦ **Data.** The incident review requires data collection on recent homicides and nonfatal shootings. The amount of data collected depends on the intensity of violence in the community. The incident review ideally examines three years of homicides. Homicides tend to provide richer intelligence and information. If a community has not experienced between 50 and 100 homicides in the last three years, the research team can include nonfatal shootings from the last 18 months in the data set.

Law enforcement's chain of command should tell attending officers that the research exercise is not an evaluation or a test but a vital opportunity to draw on their unique frontline knowledge and experience.

PART 1 STEPS

1. Group audit

Preparation

Having senior police officials present helps the research process, as they can make some of the following points to the line personnel:

- ♦ GVI is a priority of these agencies (police chief, sheriff, mayor, local prosecutor, federal prosecutor, probation, parole, as appropriate). I fully support this initiative.
- ♦ GVI has proven effective in other communities with serious violence problems.
- ♦ We must share everything we know about what is happening on the street so GVI can be effective.
- ♦ GVI represents a new way of doing things that could be really good for us. It can help us make our community safer and improve our community relationships.

Space/setup

Tables and chairs at this meeting are best arranged in a U-shape around a table or surface holding a city or neighborhood map, allowing participants to refer to the map and collaborate easily throughout the meeting.

If the project has retained an experienced technical adviser, he or she is best suited to facilitate the group audit. If not, the project manager or local research director can lead the meeting. The National Network recommends the group audit leader first observe a similar exercise in a peer community. The group audit usually requires at least two people dedicated to capturing the information elicited during the exercise. Saving any maps used is also important so that geographic locations can be recorded electronically.

Conducting the group audit

The facilitator reviews the day's agenda and does the following:

- ♦ Explain the purpose of the group audit, emphasizing that “group” can refer to any set, clique, or crew of individuals who run together: i.e., a group need not be an official gang by statutory code or current department definition. In this context, a group means two or more high-rate offenders who commit crimes together.
- ♦ Ask participants to gather around a large map of the jurisdiction or the entire city, depending on the focus, and physically identify territories associated with street groups.
- ♦ Ask officers to provide the following information for each known street group:
 - Group name
 - Group territories (mark on the map)
 - Estimated number of members
 - Known standout members within each group: e.g., those who are particularly influential, violent, or both
 - Illegal activities of the group
 - “Beefs” with other groups
 - Alliances with other groups
 - Any other information the officers can provide
- ♦ When the officers complete this process, the facilitator asks the participants to review each of the groups identified and provide the following information for each group:
 - Level of violence (scale: very, somewhat, not very)
 - Level of organization (scale: very, somewhat, not very)
 - Any larger affiliation or connection: e.g., Bloods, Crips, Norteño, and Sureño (Note: many groups do not have a larger affiliation or connection.)

Cincinnati CIRV initial group audit

In Cincinnati, the initial group audit exercise took less than a day and identified approximately 60 groups with an estimated total membership of around 1,500. Subsequent work using both qualitative research and formal criminal justice records identified those group members by name. They averaged 35 prior criminal charges each, and a third had 10 or more prior felony charges.

Appendix B.4. contains a sample data collection instrument that can be used to record this information during the exercise.

A key next step is for line officers to populate membership lists for each of the groups they have identified. That process is described in “Law Enforcement Preparation” on page 72.

Data organization and analysis

Law enforcement and researchers can use a variety of software to organize and analyze the resulting data. This software includes Microsoft Excel, Statistical Product and Social Services (SPSS), Statistical Analysis System (SAS), UCI Net, and ArcGIS. These tools help place the products of a group audit into useful analytic units, such as group databases, individual databases, group network diagrams, and geographic maps:

- **Group database.** This list includes basic information on all groups in a community, such as group name, unique group identifier, geographic location (e.g., street segments and intersections), and group violence level.
- **Individual database.** Using statistical analysis software, the analyst enters each individual as a case, including variables such as last name, first name, individual unique identifier, juvenile record, and criminal record, creating a list of all group members in the community. Often the Working Group will need to task individuals in each agency with gathering intelligence to flesh out the list.

- **Group network diagram.** This is a graphic representation of groups' alliances and conflicts: i.e., a geographical area's "street dynamics." Figure 1 on page 39 shows violent groups in Cincinnati and the nature of their relationships in 2008. The groups represented about 1,500 individuals (0.3 percent of the city's population) and were directly linked to nearly 70 percent of the city's homicides.
- **Geographic information system (GIS) mapping.** GIS mapping displays the geographic distribution of groups. Using ArcGIS or similar software, the analyst creates a shape file of street groups to overlay on a city map and then enters all group-level variables available in the group database so the information can be displayed geographically.

For several group audit tools, see Appendix B.

2. Incident review

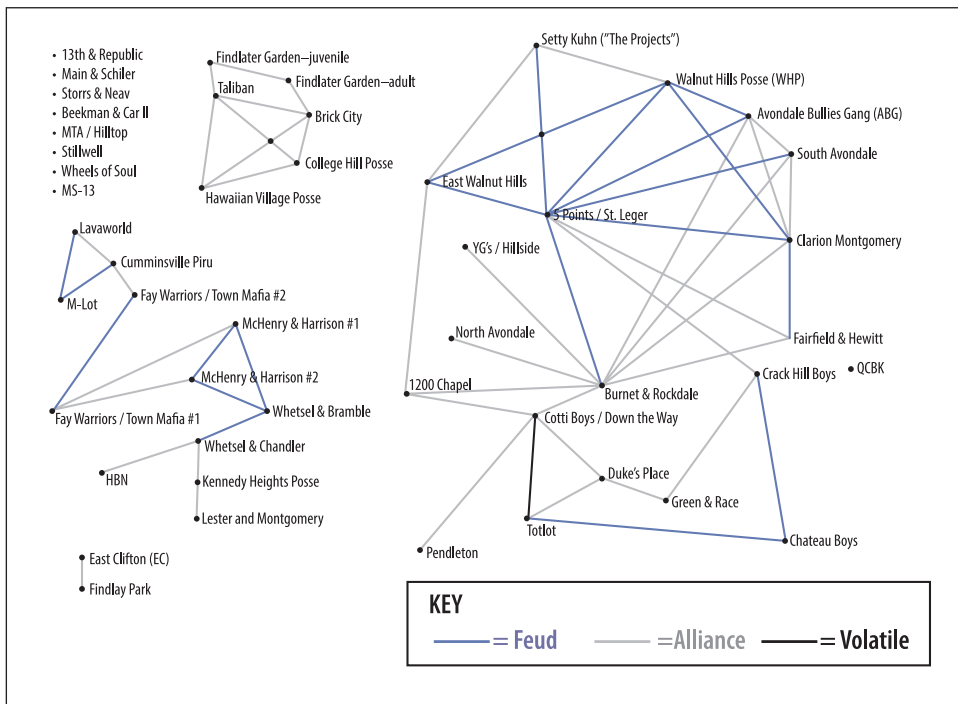
Purpose

The incident review assesses the nature of group involvement in recent homicides and shootings. The exercise helps determine the need for group-targeted enforcement and identifies which groups are the most violent and dangerous. It can also lead to an understanding of the relationships between groups and violence, as well as the specific types of violence and the context of incidents.

Preparation

Having already assembled the personnel who will contribute to the process (the group audit participants), the project manager may again want to ask high-ranking officials to speak at the incident review meeting to emphasize the project's importance.

Figure 1. Example of Cincinnati's group network diagram, 2008



Source: Policing Institute at the University of Cincinnati

Ahead of the incident review, the project manager or facilitator creates a slide presentation that shows the following information for each violent incident to be reviewed:

- Victim name and photo (if available), with a street name (if available)
- Location of the incident
- Date and time of the incident
- Known offenders or suspects, including gender, race or ethnicity, age, and photo (if available), with a street name (if available)
- Type of incident
- Type of weapon used (e.g., gun, knife, and object) and vehicle

Space/setup

The meeting requires a projector and a laptop computer for the slide presentation. The room needs to be large enough to accommodate all participants comfortably. Tables and chairs in the room are best arranged in a U-shape or theater-style.

If the project has retained an experienced technical adviser, he or she is best suited to facilitate the incident review. If not, the project manager or local research director can lead it. In either case, the National Network recommends the facilitator first observe a similar exercise in a peer community. The incident review typically also requires at least two people dedicated to capturing the information elicited during the exercise.

Conducting the incident review

The facilitator reviews the day's agenda and then does the following:

- ♦ Explain that the purpose of the meeting is to understand each incident in question. Frontline law enforcement officers often know what happened in homicides and shootings even if they cannot prove those claims in court. **The incident review aims to collect what officers know about each incident, not what they can prove legally.** The information collected will be much more extensive than what might normally be brought to a prosecution.
- ♦ Review the types of questions that will be asked about each incident:
 - Was the incident known to the review group?
 - Was the offender known to the review group?
 - Was the victim known to the review group?
 - What happened? What was this about? What is the “story” of this incident?
 - Was the offender involved in a street group?
 - Was the victim involved in a street group?
 - Did the victim and offender know each other?
 - Was the incident preceded by a violent incident?
 - Was the incident followed by a violent incident?

- Guide the participants systematically through each of the above questions for each incident. This typically results in a rich, free-ranging discussion in which volumes of information not formally recorded in investigations or other agency records can be brought to the surface, shared, and recorded.

3. Executive summary and feedback to Working Group

The research analysts, the project manager, and, if applicable, the technical adviser should work together to write a summary for the Working Group that presents findings from the group audit and incident review. The report typically begins with a brief description of the data gathering process, a brief summary of the problem analysis, and recommendations. It is then divided into four sections:

1. **Analysis of violence in the city.** This section lays out the larger patterns of street violence and key elements such as a percentage of incidents known to the review group, percentage of incidents where the victim and/or offender were reported to be involved in a street group, percentage of incidents that were preceded by or followed by violence, the total number of street groups identified during the group audit and incident review, a brief description of the characteristics of the street groups, and other key patterns of violence observed.
2. **Summary of identified street groups, characteristics, and relationships.** This section includes a sociogram of group dynamics in the city, a list of all groups, and all relevant information about each specific group: i.e., approximate size of the group, criminal activities, groups in conflict, allied groups, territories, level of violence, level of organization, and larger affiliations.
3. **Descriptive statistics from the incident review.** This section includes clear and simple descriptive statistics from the incident review, such as the number of incidents that show group member involvement.
4. **Items for clarification.** The research process typically raises issues that require follow-up, such as groups that were identified in the incident review but not in the group audit. (This can result, for example, from groups that were active in the past but are no longer active).

In most cities, the key new understandings this process provides relate to the following:

- ✦ The extent of group involvement in homicides
- ✦ The identification of violent groups and the relatively small number of individuals involved
- ✦ The even smaller number of identified “impact players”
- ✦ Patterns of homicides by major category, such as running “beefs” between groups and drug businesses
- ✦ Particularly hot running conflicts
- ✦ Interesting or unexpected local dynamics

4. Identifying group members

The problem analysis will have identified an initial snapshot of active, violent groups currently operating in a jurisdiction as well as their pattern of conflicts and alliances. Law enforcement is now in a position to identify the members of these groups. This next step serves three purposes:

1. It identifies the potential pool of individuals who can be directed to attend the call-in.
2. It enables law enforcement to respond to violence swiftly and effectively following the call-in.
3. It enables the partnership to assemble a social service structure that has sufficient capacity to serve the likely proportion of group members who will seek such help.

For all three purposes, the partnership must have a **current and accurate** list of active group members, including individuals currently serving jail or prison sentences. Identifying group members cycling in and out of jail or about to be released from prison may also be useful.

Adding qualitative measures

In addition to watching crime statistics, we measure our success by doing the following:

- Talking to school resource officers (whose direct observations mean a lot)
- Talking to community groups
- Monitoring social networks
- Talking to the police department's gang liaison officers

These measures together can paint a picture of the effectiveness of GVI.

— Marty Sumner, Chief of Police, High Point (North Carolina) Police Department

While this list can be assembled in a number of different ways, police executives usually charge their frontline gang, patrol, and vice officers, etc., with identifying group members. This often includes the following:

- ✦ Reviewing any existing informal information they may have: e.g., “beat” books and lists
- ✦ Reviewing existing formal information: e.g., case files, field stops, and gang databases
- ✦ If necessary, conducting surveillance, deploying informants, etc.
- ✦ Reviewing this information at the executive level for reliability

For group members to be included in the list, law enforcement officers must know that the members are actively involved in a street group at that time.

Linking measures to objectives

In advance, we list our goals and objectives so we know what to measure later. We track not just crime decreases but also participation in social services, membership in groups, etc. We do a social network analysis quarterly, because as you pressure the groups, you also change them, and it is useful to measure the changes. We also track who comes to call-ins. If a group member is chosen to attend four call-ins, he may not benefit from hearing it again; maybe his seat should go to someone else. We also track whether we have a representative of every group to maximize getting the word out. We track who was invited but did not show up, and then we tell probation or parole as appropriate.

— Robin Engel, Ph.D., University of Cincinnati



5. Performance measures

These five research exercises also set the stage for basic but powerful local performance measures. In most cities, law enforcement does not routinely track group member-involved (GMI) homicides; however, the incident review will provide a baseline rate for GMI killings. As the partnership implements GVI, the research team and law enforcement can compare GMI killings against this baseline: if the strategy is working, both the absolute number and the percentage of GMI incidents should go down.

The four preceding steps—group audit, incident review, executive summary, and identifying group members—will ensure the GVI partnership has a shared understanding of what is driving violence locally and who is at greatest risk of committing, or being a victim of, violence. These understandings are essential to effective implementation.

Criminal history review

Challenges:

- Every state's criminal records system is different; you need to know what you are getting and what you are missing.
- Complying with state law on the collection and sharing of criminal history records may be complicated; allow time for this. It may make sense for the police department to code the records and then give researchers the coded information instead of the protected records.

Benefits:

- Data may suggest the importance of partnering with particular agencies. For example, if two-thirds of offenders were on probation at the time of their crime, a stronger relationship between police and probation may be needed.
- Recent contacts with the criminal justice system tell the most about an offender's activities and how to address them.

— Anthony Braga, Ph.D., School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University

PART 2 STEPS

The National Network recommends the following valuable research steps, but they do not necessarily have to be completed before the Working Group proceeds to later stages of the strategy, such as community engagement and collaborating, and call-in preparation and execution.

1. Criminal history review

Reviewing group members' criminal histories provides a clearer picture of their street activity; typically provides a graphic picture of how exceptional they are, even by street offending standards; can show who is under community supervision and can be directed to attend call-ins; and can help assess group members' legal vulnerabilities.

It can also help show communities just how concentrated the problem is; convey that law enforcement understands that the community is not responsible for the violence; and demonstrate that the strategy is narrowly focused, data-driven, and not profiling.

2. Social network analysis

Law enforcement has been performing social network analysis (SNA) informally for some time, but SNA has now reached a level where it can significantly assist in addressing group violence. Groups rarely have a formal hierarchy; a highly active offending group may still be very fluid and informal. For example, even though the group audit can identify such groups, identifying “cliques” within the overall group, or the individual with the most active relationships inside the group, can be difficult.

SNA uses information that law enforcement already possesses to address and “unpack” these and similar issues. As GVI cities have used it to date, SNA often begins with the names of key group players identified during the group audit. SNA links those names to co-arrests and co-field interrogations: i.e., other people with whom key players were arrested or observed in the field. This produces network structures that illustrate how group members are connected to one another through arrests and field contacts.

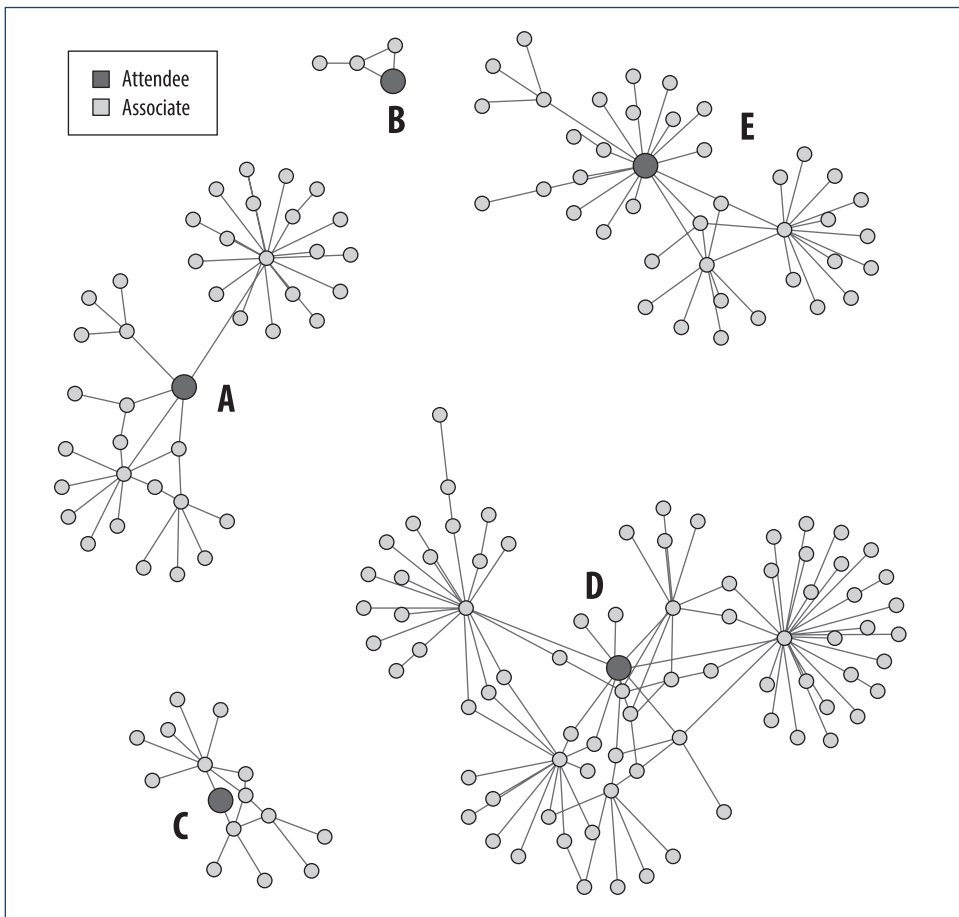
“Social network analysis helps you determine the existence of a group, even if that group is amorphous and has no name.”

— Andrew Papachristos, Ph.D., Department of Sociology, Yale University

The Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy project has used SNA to learn about group dynamics and personal connections. The information derived from SNA helps in determining inter- and intra-group dynamics; which groups should be represented at the call-in to maximize message transmission; and which individuals are at greatest risk of committing, or becoming the victim of, violence, even within their own group networks.

Figure 2 shows the social network of group members who attended two call-ins in Chicago. The dark circles represent the individuals who attended, and the light circles represent individuals with whom they had been arrested. In the call-ins, the group members were explicitly told to carry the law enforcement, social service, and community messages back to their networks. The image shows how a call-in serves as a messaging device that uses representatives of groups to communicate with the entire universe of this population in a given community.

Figure 2. Chicago's social network of call-in attendees, August 17, 2010



Source: Andrew Papachristos

If traditional crime mapping is about places, and especially “hot spots,” SNA is about people, and especially “hot people.”

A variety of software tools and approaches can produce useful SNA; the National Network and many other researchers can provide guidance and support to cities interested in these possibilities.

For another example of SNA as used in Chicago, see Appendix B.5.

Demonstration Enforcement Action

- ☐ Steps of a Demonstration Enforcement Action
- ☐ Ideas behind Demonstration Enforcement Action

This element of the GVI strategy is essential. The demonstration group enforcement action shows violent groups that future violence will be met with swift and certain consequences and that from now on, a partnership of local, state, and federal authorities will pay special attention to an entire group when a member commits a violent act.

The demonstration enforcement action illustrates, in advance, the key enforcement message that the law enforcement speakers will deliver during the call-in.

The demonstration enforcement action should rise to a crucial threshold, reaching groups in a way that other groups will want to avoid. It uses traditional legal and enforcement tools in unusual ways, generally through a coordinated interagency operation, employing existing resources.

Steps of a Demonstration Enforcement Action

The following list outlines the essential elements of conducting a demonstration enforcement action:

- **Select a “standout” violent group.** This may be a new group or a group already under investigation.
- **Identify all group members,** if not already done, especially impact players, who are usually known as such by frontline personnel.
- **Design an interagency enforcement plan** (whether short-, medium-, or long-term), focusing directly on group members. In practice, the plan can involve assessing the legal vulnerabilities of group members: e.g., current cases, old cases, warrants, probation/parole status, drug activity, child support, and IRS prosecution.

➤ Tip from the field

Demonstration enforcement in Chicago

For Chicago's first call-in, police pointed to a recent federal enforcement action against group members as the demonstration enforcement action. Because the group members at the call-in knew many of the names of those arrested and were reminded of the severe penalties associated with federal prosecutions, the federal enforcement action served as a substitute for a special, GVI-led demonstration enforcement action.

Ten days after Chicago's second call-in, a group-related shooting took place, leading to the city's first major group-focused enforcement action as part of GVI. Within two months, approximately 60 members of the Black Souls were charged with crimes.

— Brian Murphy, former Chief of Police, Bureau of Organizational Development, Chicago (Illinois) Police Department

- ✦ **Conclude the investigation and enforcement action one to two weeks prior to the first call-in.** This should result in a high-profile sweep in which arrests, warrant service, and violations occur at once. The goal is for law enforcement to deliver meaningful sanctions to the majority of the groups' members.

Future call-ins are usually best organized around the completion of subsequent enforcement actions, as the call-in will use information about those actions to demonstrate the consequences of further violence.

Ideas behind Demonstration Enforcement Actions

The Working Group should understand the several key ideas that underlie demonstration enforcement actions:

- ✦ **These actions focus on groups.** Enforcement actions often pursue serious consequences for the shooter (the individual who committed the specifically prohibited violent act) and seek to apply legal sanctions, informal sanctions, or uncomfortable attention to as many of that person's group associates as possible. This shows group members that they will be held collectively accountable for violence committed by a fellow member, countering the group dynamic that drives violence.

- ✦ **These actions use available legal and informal sanctions creatively.** Although law enforcement may not have sufficient evidence to prosecute the shooter immediately, it can focus on sanctioning other group members. Law enforcement can violate group members under community supervision, vigorously enforce the conditions of their probation or parole, serve outstanding arrest warrants, or perform drug buys and execute drug arrests. In addition, GVI partners can employ more creative sanctions, such as serving warrants for outstanding child support, checking group members for unregistered cars, or enforcing the housing code where they live.
- ✦ **The law enforcement operational team conducts the demonstration enforcement action in response to specifically prohibited violent acts.** If the call-in will later identify homicide or nonfatal shooting as the threshold crime that will trigger a law enforcement action on an entire group, then the demonstration enforcement action ought to focus on that same crime.
- ✦ **The local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies participating in GVI perform these actions in a coordinated effort.** This approach allows law enforcement to review and adopt federally eligible cases quickly when appropriate. It allows local law enforcement to work more effectively to ensure speedy disposition of group member cases through understandings with local prosecutors. It also enables the agencies to exploit legal vulnerabilities more efficiently and effectively than if each agency operated on its own.

To be effective, demonstration enforcement actions must make group members understand that the rules have changed and that law enforcement can carry out its promises after a group member engages in the prohibited behaviors.

Community Moral Voices

- ☐ Why Community Moral Voices Matter
- ☐ Engaging the Community's Moral Voice

Why Community Moral Voices Matter

In GVI, the role of moral voices in a community is closely linked to three key ideas: informal social control, legitimacy, and police-community reconciliation.

Informal social control

One of the central goals of GVI is to promote informal social control within a community. The most important factors that influence whether someone chooses to commit a crime are whether the person thinks doing so is wrong, whether the people he or she cares about and respects think it is wrong, and whether the community the person belongs to thinks it is wrong. Even in communities with the highest levels of crime, most people obey the law most of the time.

The ability of the criminal justice system to impose punishment—what scholars call formal social control—is generally the least important influence on a person's decision to commit or not commit a crime. The police are not present at every potential crime scene. Most of the crimes committed are never reported. Most that are reported are never cleared by an arrest, and most arrests do not result in meaningful sanctions. What matters the most are the norms and values held and promoted by individuals, peer groups, families, and communities that regard crime in general, or specific crimes, as wrong. Informal social control—both internal (e.g., conscience and shame) and external (e.g., beliefs of peers, loved ones, families, and the community)—is far more potent than formal social control.⁴

4. Robert J. Sampson, "Crime in Cities: The Effects of Formal and Informal Social Control," in *Crime and Justice*, vol. 8 of *Communities and Crime* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 271–311; Robert J. Sampson and John J. Laub, "Crime and Deviance over the Life Course: The Salience of Adult Social Bonds," *American Sociological Review* 55, no. 5 (1990): 609–627.

Legitimacy

Why do people obey the law? Because they fear the consequences of breaking the law? Deterrence theory would say people obey the law because they fear formal sanctions and being shamed by friends.

By contrast, legitimacy theory suggests that people comply with the law because they think it's the right thing to do or because they think that government in general, and specifically police, have the right to dictate to them proper behavior.

— Tracey Meares, Ph.D., Yale Law School

Therefore, GVI works to bring respected elements of the community into direct contact with group members to set clear norms and expectations against violence and to help bring to the surface group members' own internal standards that weigh against violence.

Legitimacy

Even if people do not feel a particular crime is wrong, they are more likely to obey the law if they feel that those making the law are legitimate and that the laws will be applied fairly. If people are not sure that refraining from violence is the right thing to do, if they do not understand that their own community disapproves of violence, and if they see law enforcement as illegitimate, then they are more likely to commit violent acts. If a group member's own views about violence can be shifted, if community norms against violence can be clarified, and if law enforcement comes to be seen as legitimate and fair, then informal social control and the impact of any action by law enforcement will be more effective.⁵

Raising the cost of law-breaking by increasing the likelihood of being caught and punished may reduce violence in the short term; however, for a long-term effect, potential offenders must also be helped to see the law as legitimate.

5. Tracey Meares, "The Legitimacy of Police Among Young African-American Men," *Marquette Law Review* 92, no. 4 (2009): 651–666, http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1527&context=fss_papers.

Normative beliefs

The key to changing patterns of gun crime lies in altering the normative beliefs of gun users themselves. Prior research, including research in Chicago, suggested that individuals are most likely to comply with the law (a) when they believe in the substance of the law, (b) when they have positive interactions with law enforcement agents, and (c) when they perceive the procedures used in enforcing the law to be fair and just.

Source: Meares and Papachristos 2009

GVI aims to enhance legitimacy as a collateral impact of its approach. It sends the following messages, from law enforcement in particular, to group members:

- ✦ We are working in partnership with your own community to stop the violence.
- ✦ People you respect and care about in your community need the violence to stop.
- ✦ Here is specific information, relevant to you as an individual, about your risk of experiencing law enforcement sanctions; we respect you and want you to know how vulnerable you are.
- ✦ We believe you are rational and can make the right decision.
- ✦ Our job is to keep this community safe. For that reason, preventing and responding to violence is our top priority.
- ✦ You and your group are at extremely high risk for violent victimization. We are committed to keeping you and them alive and safe.
- ✦ Here is exactly what will happen if group members commit violence.
- ✦ We would prefer that you not behave violently and that you live and succeed. We would prefer not to put you in prison, but we will if that's the only way to keep everyone safe.
- ✦ We would like to help you.

If there is no call-in (i.e., group members do not receive prior warning of consequences), and a group member commits homicide, and the police crack down on the whole group, the group members may perceive that the police conducted the enforcement action because the police hate them, hate black people, are getting rich from enforcement, etc.

By contrast, if a similar enforcement action takes place after a call-in, the group members may see that the police are responding to violence, at the request of the affected community, in the way they said they would during the call-in. Thus, police action will seem more transparent and predictable, and the community and group members will perceive the police as more trustworthy.

Norms, narratives, and police-community reconciliation

Police and community reconciliation is increasingly emerging as a key process in creating the partnership necessary to implement and sustain GVI successfully. Experience and research have shown that the dynamics that drive violence in affected communities are about not only group members and their relationships but also their view of police, the police's view of them, and other community residents' thoughts about both police and group members. **Fundamentally, these three stakeholders misunderstand each other in ways that have a profound impact on violence prevention efforts.**

One way of thinking about these issues is in terms of norms and narratives. Norms are standards for behavior; they establish rules to which people conform to fit into society. For example, within street group culture, a common norm is that one must respond to perceived disrespect with violence. For various reasons, the communities in which those group members operate do not always clearly convey a norm of nonviolence. GVI aims to change undesirable group norms and encourage desirable but suppressed community norms.

As noted earlier, in communities affected by high levels of violence, which are predominantly poor communities of color, there is a persistent gulf between law enforcement and the community. This gulf is embedded in history and often furthered by current practice. When the community and law enforcement address the gulf openly, a profound transformation in police-community relations is

possible. The new relationship directly supports the efficacy of GVI and is in fact one of the independent goals of the National Network: **community norms against violence and crime (informal social control), freed to emerge as tensions with law enforcement ease, can carry much of the burden of crime prevention.** Law enforcement actions, conducted in an atmosphere of community legitimacy, will be more effective and cause less unintended harm.

“Police-community reconciliation and truth-telling” is shorthand for a process of airing grievances and misunderstandings between a law enforcement agency and the community it serves. These misunderstandings and grievances tend to be explicitly racial and prevent the real working partnerships necessary for sustained public safety and healthy communities. To repair the police-community relationship, both sides must openly acknowledge grievances and debunk misunderstandings. Through this process, communities and law enforcement can come to see the following:

- ✦ They have misunderstood each other in important ways.
- ✦ Both have been contributing to harm that neither desire.
- ✦ In crucial matters, both want fundamentally the same things.
- ✦ An immediate opportunity exists for a partnership that can concretely benefit both the community and its guardians.

The gulf between distressed, high-crime communities of color and law enforcement is embedded in hundreds of years of legal oppression by various levels of government, including law enforcement. In day-to-day interactions between law enforcement and community members—from traffic stops to searches—that history may not be discussed, but it powerfully influences how affected communities of color understand law enforcement actions.

Affected communities view law enforcement actions through the lens of history, creating a narrative such as this:

The U.S. government, from the beginning of its history, has used law and state power as tools to oppress, exploit, and damage black people and black communities (and, in different ways, brown communities). When the civil rights movement achieved full legal citizenship, outside conspirators had to find new tools to continue oppressing black communities. To this end, the government invented crack, passed draconian drug laws, and privatized the prison industry so that it could continue to exploit black people for monetary gain. The state of affairs in American ghettos today is just an unbroken continuation of history.⁶

A body of formal scholarly work documents those perceptions.⁷

Law enforcement agencies have their own understandings of the relationship. In policing, for example, an arrest is a good thing. Police norms are pro-arrest, even when an arrest does not solve the underlying problem. This norm often leads to high-arrest strategies in troubled communities.

In turn, the community reads those strategies as further evidence that the point of policing is arresting and incarcerating young black and brown men rather than solving community problems. This view fuels the “stop snitching” norm, prevents partnership with police, and makes community members disinclined to speak against crime and violence and more inclined to criticize law enforcement.

Law enforcement’s narrative, its understanding of why the community is silent, often holds that the community lives off drug money and tolerates crime and violence. This narrative reduces law enforcement’s desire to engage in community partnerships and further fuels the pro-arrest norm.

6. R.K. Brunson, “Police Don’t Like Black People: African-American Young Men’s Accumulated Police Experiences,” *Criminology & Public Policy* 6 (2007): 71–101, doi:10.1111/j.1745-9133.2007.00423.x.

7. See David Kirk and Andrew V. Papachristos, “Cultural Mechanisms and the Persistence of Neighborhood Violence,” *American Journal of Sociology* 116, no. 4 (2009): 1190–1233.

Community and law enforcement understandings are mirror images of each other. Each side blames the other for producing the high crime and high incarceration rates. Yet both sides want the following:

- Safety and security
- An end to intrusive and damaging law enforcement
- Control of truly dangerous and disruptive group members

*“Racism says, ‘You don’t matter.’
The call-in says, ‘You matter.’”*

*— Pastor Sherman Mason, High Point
Community Against Violence*

To begin a process of addressing these dynamics, a police executive could communicate points such as the following in a small meeting with community representatives:

- We are frustrated too. We are trying to do a good job. We want the community to be safe, but what we are doing is not working well enough. We recognize that arresting ever-increasing numbers of people of color has not reduced the violence. We would really like to do better. We have not known how to do so—but we may have a way now.
- We understand that most people in the community are not acting dangerously, and we understand that some of those who are doing so are under terrible pressure or feel they have no other option. We want them to be safe and to be able to ask us for help. We understand that outsiders, mostly white, who come into your community to buy drugs are doing terrible damage, and we want to stop that.
- We understand that we have given you a difficult choice because as we try to protect you, we have asked you to tell us about people in the community so we can put them in prison. We understand that while you want the crime and violence to go away, you do not want an ever-growing number of community members locked up.
- We would like to do things differently—in a way that respects the neighborhood, respects everyone’s rationality, and focuses our serious attention on the few individuals who are really hurting the community (and in a way that puts them in prison only if they keep hurting the community).

- We understand that you want less crime, violence, arrests, and incarceration. We want the same. We do not get up in the morning to put black men in prison. There is a way to increase your safety and put fewer people in prison.
- We believe those involved in violence in your community will listen to you. We understand that we have no moral standing with them, but you do. We believe we can work with you to create safe ways for you to engage with them and set community standards, and that will be powerful.
- Would you be willing to work with us to try something new that would let us back off and let you step forward?

“Seeing a white chief speak this message of reconciliation helped wash away years of bad feelings. His statement disarmed the community’s objections. It deflated a mother’s claim that law enforcement was picking on her child.”

— Pastor Sherman Mason, High Point Community Against Violence

In this conversation, law enforcement and community representatives can also talk about the communities’ role in some of the following ways:

- Nobody can set standards about right and wrong for your community except you. Nobody from the outside can do this. If the only voice telling young men not to shoot people or sell drugs in public is law enforcement, or any other outsiders, nothing will change.
- A strong public stance that the police are oppressive, without a message that violence is wrong, allows the small number of individuals who are truly dangerous to justify their actions and lead the police to incorrectly believe that the community sanctions their behavior.
- The most important thing you can do is to state clearly to the few who are driving the violence that the community wants them to stop.
- We cannot do this alone from the outside. We have often acted as if we could; we have often actually thought we could. We have learned that is wrong. We need you to do this as a partnership.

The power of reconciliation

First, I had to come to the realization that what we, the police, were doing was not working.

We had a long history of baggage between the police and the minority community. How did they come to believe that the police don't care? Well, the crack house goes on and on despite their calls to police. Or they see us just driving by after they call to report a guy selling drugs on the corner.

But we do care. People don't know the many reasons we might seem to be just driving by—we could be checking the computer, responding to another call, etc. Let's acknowledge that the police do care; let's set this straight.

Let's also talk about what the community does that makes police think the community doesn't care.

I'll say, "I realize we have let you down, and I apologize for that." I'll start to see some heads nodding in agreement. I'll say, "Give us one more chance. Let's work together." This difficult speech has gone well every time.

I have even told the community that if they didn't want to do this, we wouldn't. But I knew the talks were working when, as soon as I finished speaking, a hand shot up in the back and a woman asked, "When do we start?"

This is important groundwork outside the call-ins. In a given community, we'll have one meeting with about 10 people, then ask them to invite their neighbors to another meeting, growing these meetings to 30 to 40 people, sometimes as many as 100. It takes about three visits to a community to pass the word and explain the strategy effectively.

For chiefs who don't want to admit mistakes, they should realize that what they were doing simply wasn't effective despite their hard work. They don't have to admit any bad motives, but they can't continue to claim credit just for effort.

What we were doing was ineffective and unpleasant for neighborhood residents. People might be able to tolerate aggressive and effective policing, but not policing that is ineffective and aggressive.

For us, the payoff is that the city is far safer than it used to be. Everybody wants that.

— James Fealy, former Chief of Police, High Point (North Carolina) Police Department

Engaging the Community's Moral Voice

Community moral voices are local figures who have the respect of the group members attending the call-in and who can influence how they think and act. The moral voice of the community is extremely important for articulating clear standards against violence and for community success.

“The community moral voice is essential. Without it, the Group Violence Intervention is just another law enforcement effort.”

— Reverend Jeff Brown, Co-Founder, Ten Point Coalition of Clergy, Boston, Massachusetts

Identify potential moral voices

Representatives of the Working Group typically meet with a small number of community figures to brief them on the GVI model, explain its goals and record of accomplishment, answer any questions, and ask if they are willing to play a role in the project and who else might serve as a community moral voice. Working Group representatives should plan to hold several rounds of such meetings to build a cadre of local community members willing to be involved in this way.

Social service providers cannot deliver the message of the community moral voice. GVI draws a clear distinction between the message delivered by social service providers and the community moral voice.

➤ Tip from the field

Community moral voices: The best choices

- Choose a person who knows and interacts with the group members who will be at the call-in: e.g., a teacher, community center worker, or coach.
- Choose a person whom group members will view as a natural authority in their world.
- Choose a person who will strengthen the idea that GVI is not a law enforcement tool but a partnership between the community and law enforcement to stop violence.

— Reverend Jeff Brown, Co-Founder, Ten Point Coalition of Clergy, Boston, Massachusetts

Select speakers for the call-in

Selecting the right people to communicate the community moral message is crucial. In most cities, GVI proceeds by identifying and working with community members already committed to and engaged in violence prevention work and often closely engaged with group members. They may be any of the following:

- Street outreach workers
- Workers in the prisoner reentry field
- Grassroots leaders in affected neighborhoods
- Faith leaders
- Community members engaged in existing local organizations such as groups for parents of murdered children
- Prominent local public figures such as neighborhood activists, coaches, and local business people

A note on community organizing

Having a partner in the community who can effectively educate and organize community members to support the GVI effort can be extremely valuable. In some cities, organizations like the Ten Point Coalition in Boston, the High Point Community Against Violence in North Carolina, and affiliates of the PICO (People Improving Communities through Organizing) National Network have played this role effectively.

The Working Group should first identify a small set of such figures and arrange private meetings with them to work through their questions and concerns about the strategy in private. Once they are convinced of the strategy's utility, they are usually willing to speak at the call-in or support the work in other ways. To broaden the roster of community moral voices, the Working Group can ask members of this first group for access to their social networks to find others like them—others whom they trust, who would be able to play this role, and with whom they would want to work.

The community moral voices brought into the partnership should be those to whom group members will listen. People whom active group members respect and perceive as authentic influence group members the most strongly.

Street outreach: Building bridges

The target audience for the GVI message—members of violent groups—cannot typically be reached in schools, recreation centers, or other traditional meeting places. Some GVI communities have used street outreach workers or street advocates to connect with group members, meeting them where they can be found. Street outreach of this kind can add enormous value to GVI.

In Rhode Island, the street outreach arm of the Institute for the Study & Practice of Nonviolence and the Providence Police Department entered into one of the most advanced partnerships in support of violence reduction. Street outreach workers meet weekly with the police, and the police call the institute to intervene in potential acts of retaliation or ongoing disputes and to try to convince group members wanted on warrants to turn themselves in rather than be arrested at their workplace or home.

Most of the institute's street outreach workers are ex-offenders who have been involved in street groups. Applicants undergo three rounds of interviews and are told to expect close scrutiny of their conduct, both from the institute and from law enforcement. They are chosen for their dedication to transforming their communities. At the same time, the institute informs the police department about the institute's hiring and firing decisions as a way to build trust between the partners.

The following three community groups generally have been shown to produce the most effective speakers:

1. **Parents who have lost children to violence.** Communities that suffer from violence are usually home to a number of parents who have lost children to violence. These parents have particular moral authority with group members and can speak to the pain the violence has caused in their lives and the damage it is doing to the community.
2. **Formerly incarcerated people.** Individuals who have lived through crime and violence and no longer wish to act in this way are typically well suited for speaking at a call-in. They frequently feel a powerful desire to give back to the community and have tremendous standing in the eyes of younger offenders. The formerly incarcerated can most powerfully challenge the street code and speak to the possibility of redemption.

Influentials

Borrowing a technique from its Drug Market Intervention, the National Network is evolving a way to involve “influentials” in GVI call-ins and other communications with group members.

Almost all those involved in violent crime have people who are close to them, whom they care about, and who care about them. These influentials may be parents, grandparents, other family members, friends, or mentors. They have a great ability to affect an individual’s behavior.

One can find influentials by doing the following:

- Reading probation and parole records, which often record the influentials’ roles in an individual’s life
- Checking jail and prison logs as a way of seeing who cared enough to visit group members
- Examining pre-sentencing reports
- Asking group members whom they trust and who cares about them

Not everyone identified through this process is a good influence. It pays to talk to probation and parole officers and others to find out who might be a positive influential on the group member. To invite influentials to participate, Working Group representatives explain that the strategy is not about arrests but about keeping their loved ones alive and out of prison, and ask for their help in doing so.

3. **Grassroots leaders.** Communities often have local leaders whom street group members recognize as authentic and whom they respect. Often these leaders are neither traditional community leaders nor elected or appointed officials. They are usually grandmothers, neighborhood elders, barbers, coaches, or clergy members or have some other kind of standing in the community. These authentic community leaders can speak to community aspirations for growth and change.

Social Services

- ☐ Why Offering Social Services Matters
- ☐ Organizing the Social Service Structure

Why Offering Social Services Matters

Providing help to street group members is a critical part of GVI. Social services play several roles in the strategy. First, experience shows that after a call-in some of the seasoned group members will accept the offer of help and change their lives. They may be tired of the violence, tired of going to jail and prison, and tired of being afraid for themselves and their loved ones. Getting them to accept help is enormously important for them, their families, and the community. Some have a powerful desire to give back to their community and can become valuable assets in ongoing antiviolence and community development work.

In most National Network cities, about 10 to 20 percent of group members come forward to accept help. This “service uptake” can be influenced by the following:

- ✦ The skill and credibility of the social service representative who makes the appeal at the call-in
- ✦ The quality of the services provided
- ✦ The reputation of the lead service agency
- ✦ The presence of street outreach workers as part of the partnership
- ✦ The previous experiences of group members who came forward

➤ Tip from the field

Choosing the right social service provider

To ensure good follow-through on the strategy’s promise of social services, enlist an especially able social service provider.

Look for one that can identify the group members’ needs, provide certain services, refer other services, and track each group member’s progress.

The organization needs sufficient capacity, resources, and diligence to treat all call-in group members as well as any group members they may encourage to call.

The provider ideally has a physical presence in or near the neighborhood that is the subject of GVI.

— Chris Mallette, Executive Director, Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy

Service provision also helps in mobilizing community figures who can influence the behavior of group members. Community members are more willing to deliver the needed moral messages against violence when they know that group members have a standing, genuine offer of help.

The services should be organized so that group members need call only one phone number. Any group member calling that number is then prioritized for immediate help.

Organizing the Social Service Structure

To organize an effective social service structure, the Working Group typically completes the following five steps:

1. Identify providers

For GVI purposes, the ideal social service provider offers as many of the needed reentry-style services as possible in-house, including mental health treatment, case management, education, employment training and placement, crisis intervention, drug treatment, housing, mentoring, and emergency services. The provider selected should have a reputation for effectively delivering services to people with extensive criminal justice histories, especially those whose histories include violence and street group involvement. Where no one provider can deliver all of these services, the Working Group should assemble multiple providers.

2. Bring providers into the strategy

After identifying a social service provider or providers that meet the preceding criteria, the Working Group should get dedicated providers to deliver rapid, priority attention to group members.

3. Identify a lead provider

If several social service agencies are involved, one agency should provide intake and case management for all group members who come forward. A senior representative of this lead agency should then join the Working Group going forward.

Any other agencies can provide support services via referrals from the central agency. Providers should have a reliable service-delivery record and the capacity to track and report on both service enrollment and outcomes.

The intake agency must be able to access information from any other agencies to which it refers group members. (Interagency memoranda of understanding may be needed.) Social service agencies selected for this project must be able to work with law enforcement and have good standing in the community.

4. Ensure fast response times

Upon contacting the social service providers, group members should receive a prompt response. Social services should provide an individualized assessment, backed with case management and follow-up, as soon as possible.

5. Develop tracking database

The lead social service agency, in partnership with any other social service agencies to which it will refer group members, should collect and analyze data on all group members who make contact for services. The lead agency then reports information on clients' progress, process adherence, and program outcomes to the Working Group that defines successful outcomes: e.g., completion of life plan goals, employment, or no further involvement in violence.

A note on funding

Many GVI cities have found that the best social service providers understand the merit of the work and are already working with this population in some capacity. By contrast, other providers may be drawn to the project only if they expect new funding. Therefore, the National Network recommends that the Working Group begin with pre-existing providers and work with them to obtain funding if and when enough group members come forward, requiring additional resources.

In sum, the following social service elements should be in place before holding a call-in:

- ♦ One or more social service providers have agreed to provide the needed services in a streamlined and coordinated manner.
- ♦ They have agreed to prioritize group members.
- ♦ They have identified a single intake point.
- ♦ They can provide case management.
- ♦ They have agreed to track service uptake and outcomes.

Call-In Preparation and Execution

- ☐ What Is a Call-In?
- ☐ Law Enforcement Preparation
- ☐ Call-In Security and Logistics
- ☐ Speaker Preparation
- ☐ Call-In Audience
- ☐ Directing Group Members to Appear
- ☐ Call-In Rehearsal
- ☐ Call-In Execution

The next major stage of GVI is preparing and executing a call-in, a key event in the strategy.

What Is a Call-In?

A call-in is a face-to-face meeting of law enforcement representatives, community figures, social service providers, and group-involved individuals usually on probation or parole. The call-in is a communication device; its primary purpose is to deliver the strategy's key messages clearly to the group members and, through them, back to the entire groups with which they are associated. During the call-in, the law enforcement-community partnership clearly communicates three points:

1. A community moral message against violence
2. A credible law enforcement message about the consequences of further violence
3. A genuine offer of help for those who want it

“The philosophy of this program is right on target. It tries to get people to choose not to do violence. We create an internal disincentive for group members to react with violence; we undercut the peer pressure they feel to defend their honor in a conflict.”

— Brian Murphy, former Chief of Police, Bureau of Organizational Development, Chicago (Illinois) Police Department

Law Enforcement Preparation

The law enforcement representatives of the Working Group will need to perform the following three steps before a call-in takes place:



1. Identify members of violent groups

The problem analysis (see page 31) identified violent groups currently operating in the community, as well as their patterns of conflicts and alliances. With that information, law enforcement identifies the active members of those groups, including individuals who are currently serving jail or prison sentences (especially those about to be released).



2. Determine community supervision status of group members

Once law enforcement completes the initial list of group members (see “Group audit” and “Incident review” on pages 35 and 38), probation and parole personnel examine it and identify which members are currently under supervision. Institutionalizing this process enables the Working Group to update information regularly on group membership and supervision status (in advance of any subsequent call-ins).



3. Include member(s) from each group at the call-in(s)

The Working Group should keep the number of group members attending a call-in to approximately 40 or less. Because GVI relies on group accountability, members from each group in a jurisdiction must be present at the call-in. If there are too many probationers and parolees to fit in one call-in, the jurisdiction can hold multiple sessions.

Site selection theory

To enhance the call-in's effect on group members, holding the call-in at a nonthreatening place of civic importance may be better. While many call-ins have been held in courtrooms, that setting might send an overly harsh message to group members.

Instead, holding the call-in at, for example, a park building, library, or community center instead of a criminal justice site changes the tone of the meeting and may help group members think of themselves as citizens, not outcasts. The idea is to encourage them to become upstanding citizens. These people are so alienated from law enforcement and the state that respectful treatment has a bigger impact on them than on other citizens.

Holding the call-in at a welcoming place of civic importance in effect changes the background music. It's like turning off the *Jaws* soundtrack. Even the smallest pro-legitimacy dose can affect a group member at a call-in.

— Tracey Meares, Ph.D., Yale Law School

Call-In Security and Logistics

Ideally, the call-in location should be physically secured and have a separate entrance for group members and other call-in participants so that individuals can be admitted in an orderly manner, any disruptive individuals can be kept out, and the safety of all attendees can be ensured.

The Working Group should have group members invited to the call-in arrive early and have a place at the site for checking group members in before they enter the presentation area. Law enforcement typically searches group members for weapons; this is best done away from speakers and other participants arriving. Furthermore, the police department should develop an area security plan so that group members can arrive and depart safely. Problems such as rival group members causing trouble are almost unheard of but should be prepared for.

➤ **Tip from the field**

Community setting

Another advantage of holding a call-in at a community venue—instead of a distant courtroom, for example—is that more community and family members can attend the event to hear and reinforce the message.

— Greg Baker, Executive Director, Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence

The site should have a staging area, such as a side room or a lobby. This will allow the Working Group to assemble group members prior to the call-in so they can enter all at once. A staging room will also provide a reception area for group members to meet with speakers after the call-in has finished.

Speakers and observers should assemble early, wait in the call-in area quietly, and

be prepared and ready to proceed when the group members enter. Any prep work, meetings, or socializing should be done in a separate area and out of view of the invited group members.

Speaker Preparation

The call-in is a thoroughly structured event designed to convey specific messages. The National Network recommends that the Working Group provide all of the speakers' talking points to everyone involved so everyone can see the entire message and the required coordination in advance. The Working Group should also provide information to nonspeaking participants, such as community members, ahead of the event, so they too can see the big picture.

The Working Group typically selects a maximum of three individuals from each group (i.e., law enforcement, social service providers, and the community) to deliver their respective messages.

Talking points for law enforcement

For the GVI law enforcement speakers, the key objective of the call-in is to communicate to group members that new law enforcement rules are now in place. The speakers explain that these rules target specific acts of violence and that law enforcement will collectively focus its attention on an entire group if one member commits such an act. The enforcement attention must be sufficient to convince group members that things have actually changed.

Law enforcement must communicate a promise it can keep. Usually, law enforcement promises to pay special attention to all crimes of all members of the most violent group and/or the next group that shoots or kills somebody after the call-in. **The worst/next group promise helps ensure the enforcement partnership can fulfill the promise it makes during the call-in.** Even if a community experiences multiple homicides immediately after the call-in, this enforcement promise commits the partnership to special enforcement action against only two groups.⁸

The following recommendations illustrate how the law enforcement speakers can discuss the demonstration enforcement action when they talk about the new ways of responding to violence:

- ♦ **Articulate the purpose of the meeting:** What we are about to say is not aimed at you personally but at your group. You are here to listen to the message and then take it back to your associates. Today is a new day and we are here to tell you the rules. From now on, whoever commits [the prohibited acts of violence] will bring special attention to their entire group for all crimes its members are committing.
- ♦ **Articulate the strengthened law enforcement agency partnership:** All of our local, state, and federal partners are on board with this. We are working together to ensure that violence is going to be met with swift and certain consequences from now on. (If possible, law enforcement speakers can state that they have special understandings with local and federal prosecutors that will limit plea bargaining and enable enhanced federal review and adoption of cases, etc.).
- ♦ **Clearly articulate the new enforcement rules:** We know that groups drive the violence. From now on, we are going to follow through accordingly with delivering the consequences of breaking the law. We cannot pay special attention to all crimes at all times, but the next group to commit [the prohibited acts of violence] after this meeting will get our full attention. We will go after the shooter and the entire group for any and all other illegal activities.

8. For demonstration purposes, discussion throughout the remainder of this guide will assume an enforcement focus on the next violent group.

- ✦ **Present details of the demonstration enforcement action to illustrate that law enforcement is making a credible promise:** Up on the wall are pictures and charts of the group that committed the first killing. You will see some familiar faces. This was [group name]. The shooter is now in [location/sentence/pending charges]. His associates face [likely sanctions to be imposed on the group members]. If their associate had not shot someone, they would not have gotten this attention. This is what we mean. This is how things will be from now on.
- ✦ **Articulate your partnership with the community and social services:** We hope you listen to the members of your community present here today and stop the violence. We would also like you to take the help offered by the social service providers. However, if nothing else, put your guns down. We want you to be safe.
- ✦ **Stress that the new rules are in effect now:** Starting after this meeting, all law enforcement agencies are coming after the next person that shoots someone and everyone in his group for all crimes they have committed. Now you know how things are going to work. If you see or know members of your group are about to become violent, tell them to stop. If they do not stop, your group will become the focus of special local, state, and federal law enforcement attention.

Law enforcement must not make promises or say anything that is not true. As tempting as they may be, statements such as “we know everything you do” or “we’ll send everybody in your group to federal prison” are simply not correct.

In addition to explaining the new rules, National Network cities are also paying increasing attention to community and group member perceptions of law enforcement legitimacy and the stories that both law enforcement and communities tell about each other (see “Community Moral Voices” on page 53). These stories often explain much about why working together has been so hard for the community and police and why group members think violence is necessary.

During their call-in presentations, many law enforcement speakers have been willing to focus on challenging group narratives that say police do not care about group members or the safety of their community. This focus can include statements such as the following:

- None of us have been entirely in the right; all of us would like to change.
- Law enforcement respects you and believes you can make the right decision.
- Law enforcement has been part of the problem; what we have been doing has not worked well enough; we have not kept you safe, and we want to change that.
- We know you are the ones being hurt and killed, and that is not ok. We are going to make sure from now on that you do not get hurt.
- Law enforcement does not want to put you in prison or see you dead; law enforcement would prefer that you succeed and the community thrive.
- Law enforcement will tell you exactly how to stay out of prison.
- Law enforcement wants you with your family and children—alive and out of prison.

Talking points for social service providers

In essence, the key messages of the social service providers are that (1) they are ready, willing, and able to work with group members and their associates; (2) they have various services available to help group members and their associates; (3) they will give group members immediate priority attention; and (4) group members and their associates can get help by calling a single phone number, and whenever group members are ready, the social service providers will be there to help.

Social service speakers should avoid technical jargon, such as “case management plans” or “needs assessment,” and speak plainly about how they can help: e.g., finding group members a place to live and getting drug treatment, job training, and education.

Here are some recommendations on how to deliver the social service message:

- ✦ **Articulate the overarching message of the call-in:** There is no justification for the violence. We agree with law enforcement and the community that the violence has to stop.
- ✦ **Stress that help is available for those who want it:** We want to help you and will do the best we can to help you change your life.
- ✦ **Explain the social service structure:** A new service structure has been created for you and members of your groups who want help. Our agency is prepared and qualified to help you. You can access these services by calling [provide one phone number for one point of contact]. The services available to you include [describe what is available]. We cannot promise you employment, but we promise to do the best we can to help you get a job if you want one.

Note: A social service provider must NOT promise jobs. This is ordinarily not a promise that can be delivered with certainty. Providers can promise job training and working with group members to find jobs but cannot and should not guarantee employment.

- ✦ **State that help is unconditional:** This offer is not conditional; if you want help, we will help you.

Talking points for community moral voices

Different types of community members are best suited to deliver different aspects of the moral voice messages. Some areas may overlap, but the following groupings and messages typically prove to be most powerful:

- ✦ **Parents of murdered children or other victims speak to the community pain:** The violence destroys families and the community; this is what it did to me. This is what it will do to your family.
- ✦ **Ex-offenders challenge the street code and speak to the possibility of redemption:** This was what I did. There was no justification for what I did. It was wrong. The ideas of the street code are wrong and destructive. Redemption is possible; learn from my example. I have lived the life you are living now, and I am here to tell you change is possible and life can be different.

- ✦ **Faith or grassroots community leaders speak to community aspirations:** Your acts of violence are inflicting immeasurable harm on the community. You are currently poor role models for your children and others. The community needs to grow and thrive, but it needs you alive and out of prison to do so.

Call-In Audience

In addition to the speakers, a jurisdiction may decide to invite other law enforcement, community, and social service representatives to attend the call-in as audience members. Community members in the audience can effectively demonstrate a neighborhood's support for GVI just as law enforcement representatives can demonstrate their departments' support. However, the law enforcement representatives may want to attend in plain clothes to keep the call-in setting as nonthreatening as possible.

Keeping a list of all invited audience members at the door and signing them in as they arrive has also proven useful, helping to ensure the call-in is not disrupted by anyone not involved with GVI. Some GVI cities, on the other hand, have decided not to have an audience present, particularly for their first call-ins.

➤ **Tip from the field** **Hand delivery**

In High Point, North Carolina, community moral voices help invite group members to the call-in. We take letters from the chief of police and deliver them, in-person, to the invitees. For safety, we are accompanied by police officers, but we do the talking.

We try to deliver the letters in the presence of the invitees' family members or other influentials, and we tell the invitees they can bring those influentials to the call-in.

At the house, we tell invitees that they won't be arrested at the meeting but that we, the community, have something important to tell them, so they should come.

— *Pastor Sherman Mason, High Point Community Against Violence*

Directing Group Members to Appear

Normally, the Working Group selects from each group one or more members who are currently under probation or parole supervision and directs them to attend the call-in as part of their regular reporting. Providing invitations to parolees and probationers at least one week before the call-in is important. Delivering one invitation two weeks before the call-in and a reminder several days before the event is often effective.

Letter content

The invitation letter typically does the following:

- Addresses the recipient by name
- States that the person has been identified as being at risk for committing, or being the victim of, an act of violence
- Invites the person to attend the meeting; clearly states the meeting's date, location, starting time, and expected length
- Provides a general overview of the meeting and who will be speaking (e.g., law enforcement, social service providers, and community members) without mentioning names
- Highlights that the invitee will not be arrested or detained if he or she attends the meeting

➤ Tip from the field

Picking the right group members

We check whether a person is an associate of a violent group, even if he is not known to be an actual member, and whether he has committed violence recently. That's who we pick for the call-in—people who have been hot recently. We try to bring in one or two members of each active group, capping the call-in at 20 group members.

— Marty Sumner, Chief of Police, High Point (North Carolina) Police Department

Best practices for letter delivery

Many cities opt to hand deliver invitations, as mailing them has often proved ineffective. Teams of police officers can deliver the letters, with some combination of probation or parole staff, community representatives, social service representatives, or others associated with the GVI effort. Many cities have also used follow-up phone call reminders.

The teams usually deliver the letters along with a respectful, simple, and short conversation (perhaps 30 seconds), which typically touches on the following points:

- We want to invite you to hear some important information about law enforcement activities and violence in the neighborhood.
- Community members and law enforcement will present some information that will be important for you and your associates to know.
- This information discusses how to stay out of prison.
- You will not be arrested or detained if you attend. We want you to hear the message and take it back to your associates.

Letters are best delivered to the location where the person is known to reside (and in the presence of family members, if possible). If the person is not available, the letter can be left with someone known to be influential in the person's life. That person may be a spouse, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, or anyone known to have a positive impact on the decision making of the individual.

➤ Tip from the field

Strengthening the message

In Cincinnati, the GVI team wrote a personalized letter for each group member invited to the call-in. Machine-signed by the chief, the letters told group members that they were at risk of enhanced sentencing and should avoid further arrests. The letters were handed to group members at the call-in, in sealed envelopes, and the group members were asked not to open the envelope until after the call-in.

Aside from emphasizing that the group members must avoid future violence or risk enhanced sentencing, the letters were intended to make the group members feel they were already under the close attention of the police, even before a post-call-in enforcement action could be carried out.

— James Whalen, Assistant Chief, Cincinnati (Ohio) Police Department

Call-In Rehearsal

Once the Working Group has identified the speakers and moderator for the call-in, the group should schedule a rehearsal and go over the previously developed talking points for each speaker. **GVI is an intervention based on information and messaging; if the messaging goes off script, the strategy may be not only ineffective but also damaging.** Disrespectful and challenging messages can provoke group members to act out after the meeting. For this reason, the National Network recommends preparation and a rehearsal before the call-in. **The National Network strongly recommends that the moderator not permit anyone to speak at a call-in if they did not attend the rehearsal.**

The project manager or an appointed moderator typically runs the rehearsal and provides constructive feedback to each speaker. Sharing feedback with one another is also useful for speakers.

The agenda for the rehearsal outlines the order and the time limit for each speaker; the same agenda can be used for the call-in. For a sample rehearsal agenda, see Appendix C.

The rehearsal should take place within one week of the call-in (often the day before), ideally in the same location and with all speakers present. At this time, the speakers should recite their talking points as if they were actually speaking before a live audience of group members and practice keeping to their assigned time limits. The rehearsal allows participants to offer constructive criticism and feedback to each other to ensure all messages are clear, concise, respectful, and effective. It also allows speakers to learn the messages of others, avoid repetition, and enhance community building for the partnership.

Each speaker can receive or prepare a set of talking points in advance of the rehearsal. These can be customized and adapted to local conditions, but maintaining the core themes is important.

For sample talking points for each set of speakers, see “Speaker Preparation” on page 74.

Checklist for a successful call-in

The National Network provides technical assistance to facilitate successful call-ins containing elements of the following list (which cities implementing a first call-in may find useful):

- ✦ The call-in setting is a place of civic and symbolic importance. Absent the negative connotations of a law enforcement setting, it still allows for physical security. The room is large enough and comfortable and has the right feel for the call-in's purpose.
- ✦ All street groups are represented. If those called in are more than 40 individuals, the jurisdiction holds multiple call-ins.
- ✦ A full-time project manager helps to ensure the call-in is well-organized logistically and operationally.
- ✦ Community attendance is robust, and the room is organized to facilitate face-to-face messaging. Speakers greet attendees as they enter and mingle with them before the meeting starts.
- ✦ A PowerPoint presentation visually conveys a number of key themes, such as the GVI no-violence message; official knowledge about groups and group members; how to access services; and clear explanations of group-focused enforcement actions.
- ✦ Speakers stay focused on the key messages of their talking points and keep to their allotted time.
- ✦ Law enforcement speakers use a matter-of-fact tone and include reconciliation content.
- ✦ Community speakers convey the pain of violence and incarceration. A mother of a murdered child, the brother of a group member in prison for life, or other community speakers debunk the street code and group culture.
- ✦ A social service speaker clearly states that help is available and explains how group members can access that help.

- All speakers consistently treat the group members as respected partners in the project, telling them they have influence and can help make the situation right by talking to their people and helping to stop the violence.
- The moderator keeps the meeting on track and within a one-hour timeframe.
- The Working Group cultivates a trusted reporter, and media coverage is well-managed, favorable, and accurate.

Call-In Execution

The Working Group should schedule the call-in within a week or so of the demonstration enforcement action. The call-in itself carries great meaning. Having law enforcement, community figures, and social service providers appear together before group members and speak to them directly with one voice is extremely unusual. As such, the call-in conveys the strength of the partnership.

The tone of the call-in should clearly convey that the partnership (1) regards the group members to be rational and responsible, (2) expects them to make good use of the information provided, and (3) views any law enforcement consequences that might fall on them for noncompliance as strictly business, nothing personal—the behavior is rejected, while the people are embraced. Speakers should avoid the use of derogatory terms. In unison, all must convey there is no justification for the violence.

The call-in should last no longer than 90 minutes; keeping it to one hour is ideal.

Speaking order

Different cities arrange their call-ins differently. Many open the call-in with the moderator, move to law enforcement speakers, then social services, and then community members. Other partnerships prefer to have community members speak first to emphasize the intervention is community-led, with law enforcement there to support the communities' demand that the violence stop. Other cities have social service providers speak last and provide them with time to engage directly with call-in participants before the meeting adjourns. The most important point is that all three components of the partnership are represented and their key messages delivered.

Visual aids

Especially at initial call-ins, the explicit purpose of talking about group enforcement actions is to establish the credibility of group-focused sanctions. The National Network recommends the partnership create a visual display of the group most recently targeted for an enforcement action. This can include mug shots or other pictures of each group member. If there was a meaningful hierarchy to the targeted group, pictures can be arranged accordingly.

Under each picture, include the actual or potential sentences or sanctions the offenders face. A key point to communicate is that these individuals would still be in the community if their group had not self-selected for law enforcement attention by committing acts of violence.

Moderator's role

The moderator's role is to open the call-in, set the appropriate tone, frame the meeting, manage the transition between speakers, and close the meeting. The Working Group should select a moderator who represents the effort of the call-in as a community and law enforcement partnership. Often the project manager is a good choice. Some cities have used co-moderators to model this partnership.

The moderator is also responsible for ensuring the meeting stays on track. In the adrenaline of the moment, speakers can sometimes go off message or run long. If this happens, the moderator can refocus the call-in by reiterating the core themes. If group members become unruly, the moderator can address this and, if necessary, ask probation or parole officers to settle them down or remove them.

Finally, the moderator must ensure no speakers engage in conversation with the group members—this includes not allowing or answering their questions. **If group members who are under supervision engage in two-way conversation with law enforcement representatives in this setting, it can be considered a custodial interrogation.** Even more important, the partnership can quickly lose control of the room and the essential messaging. For this reason, group members must be asked to hold any questions until after the meeting, when they can seek out and speak with individual GVI representatives.

For a sample call-in agenda, see Appendix C.

For an eyewitness account of the effect a call-in can have on group members and participants, see Appendix D.

Maintenance and Ensuring Program Integrity

- ☐ Recap and Planning with the Working Group
- ☐ Ongoing Data Analysis
- ☐ Follow-Through on Call-In Promises
- ☐ Ongoing Communication

Recap and Planning with the Working Group

After the first call-in, usually within one to two weeks, the Working Group and project managers typically meet to do the following:

- ✦ Discuss the call-in
- ✦ Assess recent violence and ensure follow-through on enforcement promises
- ✦ Assess social service uptake and ensure effective service delivery
- ✦ Continue to identify and involve community moral voices to broaden and deepen community support for the work
- ✦ Establish a schedule of regular future meetings

Law enforcement-sensitive information cannot be shared with the social service and community members of the Working Group, so the law enforcement team within the Working Group may have to discuss certain issues in separate meetings.

Staying in touch

To maintain good communication between our Working Group's teams (i.e., law enforcement, social services, and moral voice representatives), we hold strategy implementation meetings monthly with the head of each team. At those meetings, we can't share all of our information, but we can share enough to keep each other informed.

— Dan Gerard, Captain, Cincinnati (Ohio) Police Department

Regular meetings of the Working Group can provide an opportunity to assess the integrity of strategy implementation: i.e., to ensure GVI is being carried out as it should. These meetings also provide a venue for all the partners to share information and think together. Regular meetings help keep the strategy alive over time.

Ongoing Data Analysis

The Working Group can increase the effectiveness of GVI by continuing some of the analytical steps it took during the initial problem analysis. These include structured problem analysis, social network analysis (where possible), and tracking performance metrics. For details on each of these steps, see “Problem Analysis” on page 31.

Follow-Through on Call-In Promises

Once the GVI partnership has successfully executed the call-in, it must keep the promises it made there. The next group that shoots or kills someone must become the focus of the inter-agency law enforcement team.

Similarly, the social service provider must keep its promises. Those who call the number provided at the call-in should get special, intensive help to the greatest extent possible.

Law enforcement

The key tasks for law enforcement following each call-in are to monitor violence, detect group-involved violence, and respond with special, coordinated law enforcement attention to all crimes of the next group to cause violence.

Law enforcement, usually the police, must monitor homicides and shootings carefully to track those that involve groups as either suspects or victims. Again, motive does not matter for this purpose; only group involvement matters. Police should regularly review and assess shootings (fatal and nonfatal) by group member involvement to determine which group(s) will get special enforcement attention. Tracking these incidents can generate a group violence scorecard by which law enforcement can tell, at any given time, which groups in the city are the most violent and which group is the next to shoot or kill someone after each call-in.

Once law enforcement has identified a group for GVI enforcement action, law enforcement must align the full resources of the criminal justice system—local, state, and federal—to act on its promise. Agency leadership must assign responsibility for carrying out the GVI action to an operational team that usually consists of police, an assistant district attorney, an assistant U.S. attorney, probation, parole, and any other participating enforcement agencies. Furthermore, that agency leadership must protect this team in being able to conduct the GVI action and hold the team accountable for doing so. **The purpose of this operational team is to focus enforcement on all members of the street group that the Working Group has identified to receive special attention.**

All such investigations are different, although there are patterns. Group enforcement actions generally fall into the following categories:

- ✦ **Quick enforcement action (30 to 60 days).** The law enforcement team assesses the current legal exposure of group members to pull any available legal levers. Actions include violating group members under community supervision, vigorously enforcing the conditions of their probation or parole, enhancing those conditions, serving outstanding arrest warrants against group members, performing street drug enforcement, reviewing current cases for state enhancements or federal adoption, withdrawing plea deals from group members, reviewing the sources of bail and bond funds, serving warrants for outstanding child support, checking for unregistered cars, performing housing code enforcement where they live, checking child support conditions, checking for outstanding fines, and conducting bail reviews. These actions often result in arrest, detention, and short jail sentences as well as some shorter state sentences for group members.
- ✦ **Medium-term enforcement action (60 to 90 days).** The Working Group engages in a focused state-level drug or other undercover investigation. These actions often result in meaningful state sentences, but the most important factor is including as many group members as possible. These actions can include federal review and adoption of some cases.

- ✦ **Major/long-term enforcement action (six months to two years).** Federal investigations can involve substantial federal charges, career criminal enhancements, and organized crime statutes. State gang, wire, or conspiracy charges are sometimes possible as well. This type of action could be a federal or state-federal, long-term drug or Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act (RICO) investigation that results in the adoption and prosecution of all or most cases in federal court. This type of action generally results in the heaviest sentences and will lead to significant attention from the media, the public, and group members. However, such actions are rare, resource-intensive, and take time, often as much as one to two years.

Group enforcement actions can be effective even if there is no formal case against the perpetrator for the homicide or for any crime.

Very violent groups are often already the subject of pending state and/or federal investigations. If these investigations are completed within reasonable proximity to the call-in, they can be used for demonstration purposes, and no special GVI-initiated enforcement action will be necessary. For this to work effectively, (1) the investigation must be group-focused in some way (**this does not mean the prosecution has to use group-related statutes such as RICO or gang enhancements, but the enforcement action must be directed at a criminal group**), and (2) the group must be known as violent.

The group-targeted enforcement ends when as many members of the group as possible have experienced a meaningful sanction (e.g., arrest, incarceration, enhanced community supervision, and asset forfeiture) because of the operational team's actions. The timing is ultimately the decision of the operational team, which will need to make a judgment call as to when it has had an impact on the group.

The GVI partnership can then present the enforcement action as a warning and as evidence of follow-through to other groups in the next call-in.

Social services

In the call-in, social service providers offer attendees special help to change their lives. For many reasons, tracking service uptake and outcomes is important. The lead social service provider agency should report service uptake (i.e., individuals who come forward), service engagement (i.e., services received), and outcomes (e.g., employment and continued engagement in programming) to the Working Group on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Tracking the provision of services after a call-in typically involves the following:

- Collecting information on the number of group members who have sought help
- Tracking referrals from the lead agency and follow-through by social service partner agencies
- Ensuring that all social service providers are prioritizing group members
- Tracking retention rates for services obtained by group members
- Taking affirmative steps to reach out to group members who have “fallen off” the service track
- Preparing a brief update of success stories and service uptake for use in the next call-in
- Assessing participants’ subsequent involvement in violence

As with the follow-through enforcement actions, reporting social service successes to group members at subsequent call-ins is important because it is evidence of the GVI partnership’s integrity.

➤ Tip from the field

Uptake and progress

One advantage of continuing to hold regular meetings with the GVI Working Group is the chance to touch base with social service providers. At the meetings, we ask whether group members from the call-in have been calling for assistance and, if so, whether they are making progress.

— Marty Sumner, Chief of Police, High Point (North Carolina)
Police Department

Community moral voices

Sustaining engagement between the right kind of community figures and group members between call-ins is a critically important but still evolving component of GVI. However, this is a research and development priority for the National Network, and establishing a strong community moral voice can look different from community to community.

In some cities, community moral voices take the initiative to maintain the strategy. In High Point, North Carolina, for example, some community moral voices who have participated in call-ins coordinate their efforts through the High Point Community Against Violence to ensure that any group members who request help are receiving social services. They have also taken direct action to promulgate the GVI message of nonviolence, going to group members' homes regularly to talk to them and their families and urging them to stop their conflicts with other groups.

In Boston, the Ten Point Coalition pre-dated the original "Operation Ceasefire" implementation but became part of the partnership to deliver the community moral voice message to group members between call-ins.

A number of cities are currently testing and refining models to enhance this component of the strategy. Such models include community members working directly with influentials or with impact players (i.e., individuals with strong connections and standing in their group) and delivering specially tailored community moral voice messages directly to them wherever they can be found.

While community moral voices should always be represented in the Working Group, the community at large can be kept informed about GVI progress through meetings, fliers, and on-the-street interactions. The GVI effort is strengthened when *all* partners develop relationships, build trust, and maintain lines of communications with community residents.

Ongoing Communication

Traditional call-ins

After the first call-in and the resulting group enforcement action, the GVI partnership should hold another call-in. The invitation list can include some or all of the same group members who attended the first call-in as well as new ones. Over time, as group members both exit and enter into court supervision, that population will change.

In addition to the central messages conveyed at all call-ins, speakers at each subsequent call-in must point out the connection between the first call-in and the group enforcement action. They can explain that law enforcement did what it said it would, naming the group member who killed someone and detailing the special actions the law enforcement team took against his entire group and the sanctions his associates are facing.

The speakers should emphasize that they will continue the strategy, including group enforcement actions, as long as group members commit acts of violence. Speakers can also point out that some group members asked for help at the prior call-in and detail the help they received.

The GVI partners can hold repeat call-ins as needed to reach violent groups and to send the message about group enforcement, community concern, and available services. Within the first one to two years of implementation, a good rule of thumb is to hold a traditional call-in every three to four months. After a couple of years, the jurisdiction can reassess the level of street violence and adjust the call-in schedule, if necessary. It can then be supplemented with other methods of group communication and violence prevention (see “Custom notifications” on page 94).

➤ Tip from the field

Data updates

It's vital to stay current on the dynamics of the local group violence problem, keeping up to date on groups and individuals. In Cincinnati, we update our intelligence gathering and analysis three times a year.

Custom notifications

The call-in is the traditional method of the GVI partnership to communicate with group members. However, a number of National Network cities have developed supplementary methods to keep channels of communication open between call-ins, reach key players who are not under community supervision, and respond to “beefs” and retaliatory violence on short notice.

For example, the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) conducts regular visits with key group members at their homes or on the streets to keep its antiviolence message alive between call-ins. If the visit takes place on the street, officers usually call the individual to the side; however, if other group members are present and want to listen, the officers do not exclude them.

The officers tell the group members what they know about current violent activity in the neighborhood as a way to demonstrate their up-to-date intelligence. Officers point out the legal vulnerabilities of the individuals based on criminal records, handing them a letter on police letterhead that details their personal exposure. The officers reiterate the initiative’s antiviolence message and tell group members they are expected to control group-related violence in their neighborhood or face the consequence of an enforcement action on their groups.

CIRV also holds voluntary call-ins at prisons and jails to talk directly to those with a violent crime conviction and no more than six months left in their sentence. The partnership feels strongly that these individuals need to hear its antiviolence message, be informed about the new rules of law enforcement before they return to the city, and learn that social services are available to them upon re-entry.

In High Point, North Carolina, law enforcement and community partners have used custom notifications as a method to quell retaliatory violence between groups. When a violent incident flares up or intelligence alerts police that groups or individuals are “hot,” law enforcement goes directly to the individuals involved. The officers deliver a message and letter custom-tailored to the individuals’ legal exposure to provide information about consequences of further violence and reinforce the community’s antiviolenace demand. When possible, a member of the city’s High Point Community Against Violence accompanies law enforcement to demonstrate support for the message.

The National Network recommends using both traditional call-ins and supplementary communication methods such as custom notifications to increase the impact of the GVI message.

Sustainability and Accountability

- ☐ Performance Management
- ☐ Governing Structures

GVI requires nontraditional partners to work together in unusual ways and focus ruthlessly on violence prevention. The central challenge of the work after its initial launch is ensuring the sustainability of the strategy in the long term. Each jurisdiction and community will have to develop a sustainability and accountability structure that works for its particular environment. The following sections detail sustainability methods that have worked in some National Network cities or are based on lessons learned in cities where sustainability proved a challenge.

Performance Management

Creating a performance management system is highly useful for sustaining a GVI effort. It typically includes an intelligence gathering mechanism and an organizational structure to manage the GVI partnership.

Intelligence maintenance systems

The formal and informal intelligence that crime analysis units and academic partners gather, record, and analyze guides GVI in important ways. Keeping such data timely is crucial.

Cities vary in how often they update their group violence intelligence. For the purpose of GVI, the Working Group should update such intelligence (e.g., group alliances, conflicts, and membership) at least twice a year if not quarterly.

Both fatal and nonfatal shootings are best tallied according to street group (victim or suspect) to track which groups are most violent. Once the Working Group completes the initial incident review, it should track incidents more or less in real time.

“The police department needs to commit to the Group Violence Intervention. GVI should not be an exception to the rule—it should be the rule.”

— Anthony Braga, Ph.D., School of Criminal Justice,
Rutgers University

In some cities, this takes the form of a weekly call among knowledgeable personnel to debrief fatal and nonfatal shootings from the prior week and make preliminary group assignments. The Working Group then revisits this information quarterly to reassess original findings and incorporate investigative developments.

The analysis determines which street groups are the most violent and victimized at the current time. This can help the GVI partnership prioritize enforcement actions, street outreach, social services, and other activities to focus on the hottest groups.

Repeating the group audit process annually or semi-annually can be helpful to assess whether the network of street groups has changed because of GVI implementation.

Keeping focus, losing focus

GVI was originally implemented in Boston under the name Operation Ceasefire. After several years, despite much success, the effort faded away, and Boston lost its strategic focus on group violence reduction. The program’s demise may be attributed to several factors:

- A police department shift led to the removal of the Ceasefire project manager. No one else took responsibility for the strategy.
- The level of violence had declined so much (due to Ceasefire) that the interagency Working Group lost focus.

Other cities, too, have seen their GVI efforts fade for reasons such as these:

- The city had formal commitments from political leaders who did not follow through.
- The police department handed the effort off to a junior officer who did not have enough authority to compel others to participate.

Partnership management

GVI requires many energetic partners, unflagging focus, coordinated actions, and substantial organization and planning. Even when actions are not required, the partnership itself needs care and maintenance.

The independent partners have different constituencies, purposes, and resources. As such, producing a coordinated response from politically independent agencies and diverse individuals can be a challenge. Many GVI cities rely on a project manager to serve as a shepherd to the Working Group, and some cities have established larger project management teams.

Governing Structures

Experience has shown that often the project manager and Working Group alone cannot ensure that GVI is successfully sustained. There is not yet one single approach that can be said to work in any given jurisdiction.

However, the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) developed one of the most advanced governing structures yet seen. It may, in full or in parts, serve as a model for other cities. CIRV developed its governance structure after carefully studying similar violence interventions that experienced dramatic initial violence reductions followed by partnership disintegration due to internal conflict, leadership transition, or the loss of political will to focus on the strategy.

› Tip from the field

Lessons learned from Boston

Operation Ceasefire in Boston was founded as an informal Working Group of people from different agencies. The people, individually, were interested in pursuing a Group Violence Intervention, but doing so was a special, additional task, not their main duty. As team members were transferred to new posts, it proved difficult to keep the effort going.

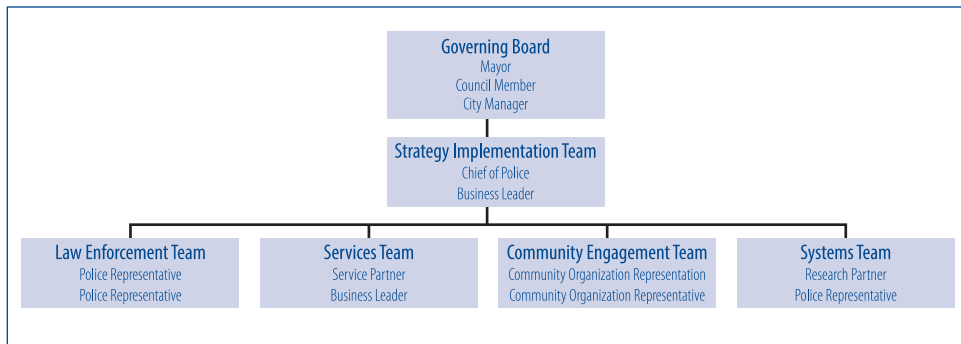
The effort's informal status also meant that participation by social services and community representatives was episodic. A more formal model of organization might have provided a mechanism for those groups to meet regularly with law enforcement to assess progress toward goals and refine operations as needed.

A board of directors that oversees the Working Group would be good for two reasons:

- › The Working Group would have to report its results to a group in authority, providing accountability.
- › The board can help the Working Group obtain needed resources.

— Ted Heinrich, Assistant U.S. Attorney, Boston

Figure 3. CIRV's organizational structure



Source: Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence

In addition to law enforcement, social service, and community partners, CIRV includes various other teams as shown in Figure 3. For example, the systems team, which ensures permanence and quality assurance, includes intelligence analysts, business consultants, and academic advisers. It produces best practice documents, tracks goals and measures, prepares annual reports and partner briefings, evaluates performance, and suggests process improvements.

The governing board provides Cincinnati's GVI initiative with resources and helps it overcome barriers to success. The strategy/implementation team is tasked with CIRV's daily operations, including making key decisions, developing program strategies, securing resources, and continuously monitoring results. The team reports to the governing board regularly to provide progress updates and request resources. Finally, each of the four strategy teams is responsible for executing a particular element of the initiative.

CIRV's governing structure ensures all partners are involved in goal setting and decision making and consequently share credit and blame. A project manager relieves the individual agencies and partners of substantial organizational burdens. Furthermore, the meeting and report schedule serves to structure, coordinate, and focus the strategic activity. The meetings and reports can also function as an ongoing seminar in which all partners can learn from the experience of various interventions.

Conclusion

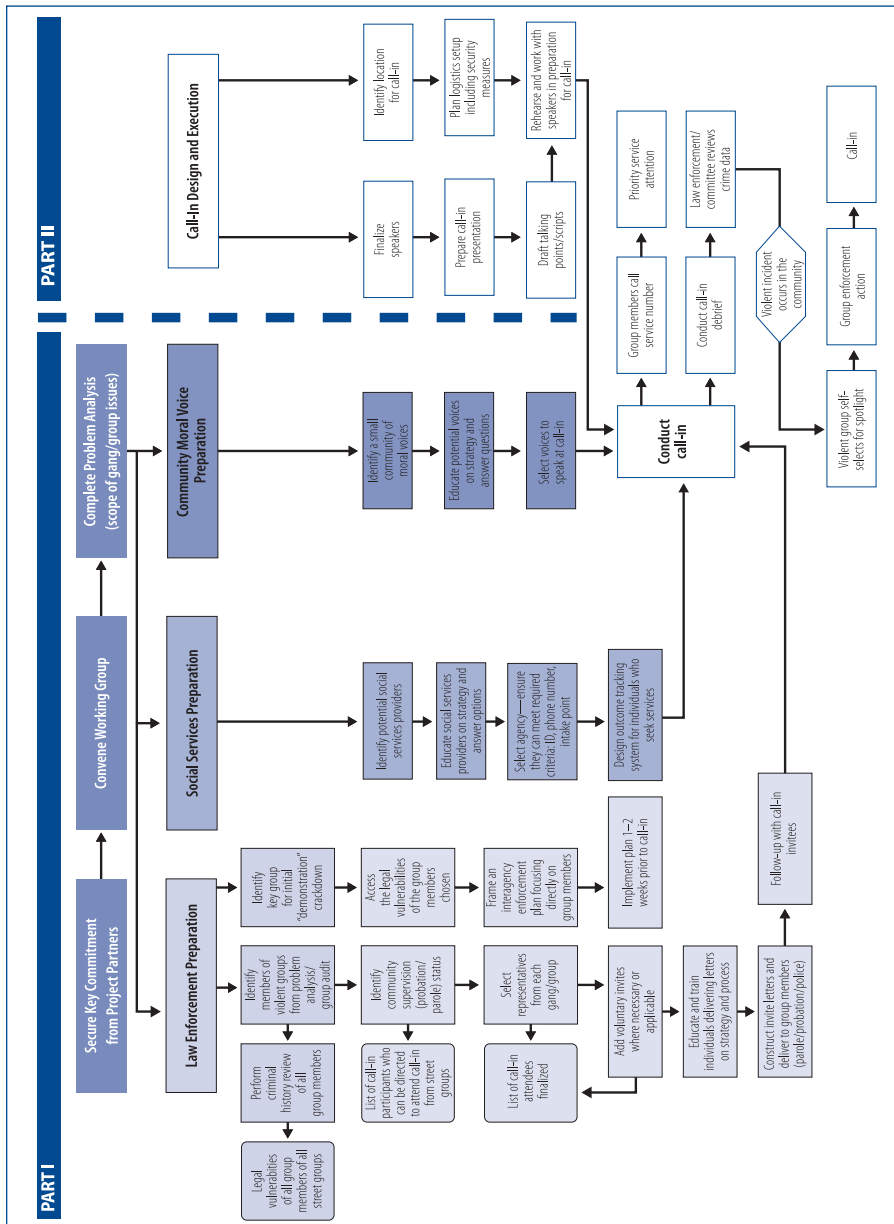
The National Network for Safe Communities continues its work to strengthen and build the components of the Group Violence Intervention. For over 15 years, the approach has reduced violence in a range of cities across the nation, and it continues to evolve.

Experience has shown that when community members, law enforcement, and social service providers make an organized effort to engage with the members of violent groups according to the guiding principles of GVI, cities can achieve striking results—results that everyone can agree on: e.g., reducing violence, improving law enforcement-community relationships, and bettering the quality of life in the nation’s most vulnerable neighborhoods.

The National Network hopes this guide helps communities implementing GVI and asks them to share what they are doing; how the National Network can help; and what they are learning, inventing, and adding to the common goal of reducing violence throughout the United States.

Appendices

A. GVI Flow Chart and Timeline



Source: National Network for Safe Communities

B. Group Audit Tools

1. Pre-session checklist

- ✦ Select a location for the session. The room must be large enough to accommodate the participants comfortably.
- ✦ Obtain a flip chart, markers, an easel, and a large map of the city.
- ✦ Identify individuals to attend the session.
 - From the police department:
 - Knowledgeable beat officers from every district, unit, or area with high numbers of homicides, shootings, or violent incidents (must know about group dynamics)
 - The most knowledgeable detectives from homicide, vice, gang, and other specialized units involved with violent crime
 - From probation, parole, and other law enforcement agencies:
 - Officers knowledgeable about homicides, shootings, or violent incidents
- ✦ Notify individuals regarding the session.
 - Follow up with supervisors to ensure the individuals are committed to attend and participate for the full session.
 - Tell the individuals they are not to bring any official records to the meeting.
- ✦ Identify speakers who can begin the session (typically high-ranking officials who will describe the importance of the group audit and encourage full participation).
- ✦ If working with an experienced adviser, let him or her facilitate the group audit. If not, the GVI project manager can facilitate.
- ✦ Identify at least two members of the experienced adviser's team to assist with data collection.
- ✦ Arrange for breakfast and lunch to be delivered to the group audit session.

2. Sample schedule for group audit

8:30 AM: Coffee and breakfast set up and served

- ✦ Place the easel with a large pad by the front of the room.
- ✦ Place the map where it is easily accessible by participants in the room.

9:00 AM: Welcome (law enforcement speaker)

9:15 AM: Welcome (moderator)

- ✦ Thank everyone for participating.
- ✦ Read the oral consent form (if needed, depending on the requirements of any researchers' universities).
- ✦ Go over the schedule for the day.
- ✦ Go over the process of the group audit, describe the questions participants will be asked, and address any questions any participants may have.

10:00 AM: Group audit

12:00 PM: Lunch break

12:30 PM: Group audit

2:30 PM: Break*

2:45 PM: Continue until completion

* Breaks should be provided whenever necessary. If participants' attention is flagging, the moderator should call a 15-minute break.

3. Sample group audit instrument

Jurisdiction: _____

Name of group: _____

GVI reference number for group: _____

Estimated size of group: _____

In what core criminal activities is the group involved?

Is this group involved in a persistent conflict with other group(s)?

Yes No

If yes, what group(s)?

Do you know what started the conflict(s)?

Does the group have alliances with other group(s)?

Yes No

If yes, with which other group(s)?

Are there any influential members who are particularly violent or who seem to lead the group?

Does this group “claim” or belong to a larger network (e.g., Bloods, Crips, and Gangster Disciples)? If so, do you think that larger network has a lot of influence on the group’s behavior?

How organized is this group?

Highly organized Somewhat organized Not very organized

Is this group violent?

Extremely violent Somewhat violent Not very violent

4. Group audit data organization

The group audit data is best organized in the following ways:

Group network diagram to show group alliances and conflicts (see Figure 1 on page 39)

- **Group database to store group-level information**

- Use statistical analytic software, such as SPSS or SAS, to enter each group as a case.
- At a minimum, include the following fields (i.e., variables) when appropriate:
 - Group name
 - Group unique identifier
 - Geographic location (street segments, intersections, etc.)
 - Group violence level
 - Estimated number of participants
 - Number of known participants
 - Police jurisdiction (e.g., precinct or district)
 - Number of members on probation or parole supervision
 - Number of members who have attended a call-in session
 - Number of members currently receiving services

This process provides a list of groups operating in the community, along with their key characteristics, as identified by front-line law enforcement.

• **Individual database to store individual-level information**

- Using statistical analytic software, enter each individual as a case.
- At a minimum, include the following variables when appropriate:
 - Last name
 - First name
 - Individual unique identifier
 - Community identification
 - Sex
 - Race
 - Date entered into database
 - Group name
 - Group unique identifier
 - Juvenile record
 - Criminal record
 - Probationary status
 - Parole status
 - Notified to attend call-in
 - Attend call-in

• **GIS mapping to capture geographical distribution of groups**

- Using ArcGIS or similar mapping software, create a shapefile of street groups to overlay on a city map.
- Enter all group-level variables available in the group database so the information can be displayed geographically.

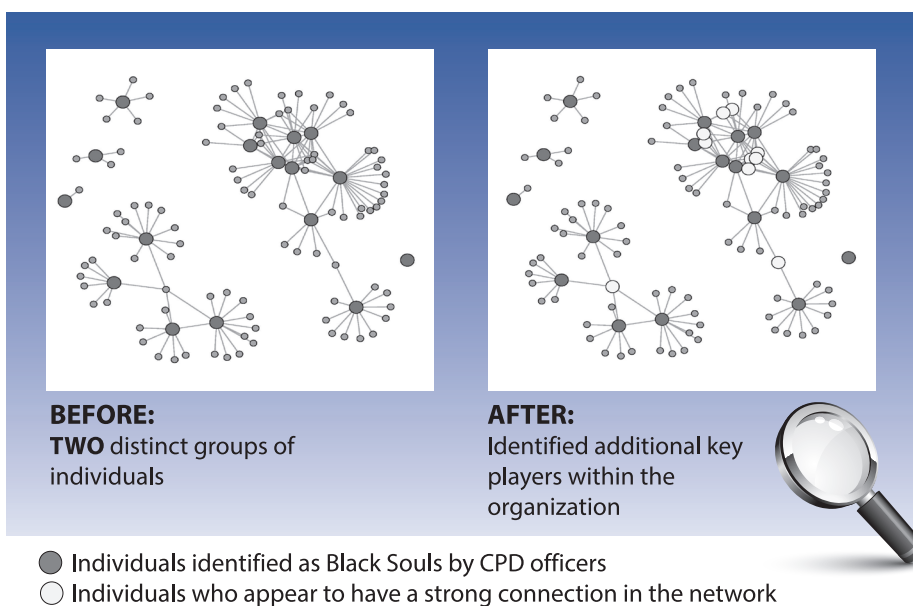
5. Social network analysis example

After Chicago's first call-in in August 2010, a member of the Black Souls was charged with the murder of a rival group member. In line with the GVI promise, swift and meaningful law enforcement actions were taken not only against the shooter but also against the Black Souls as a group.

As a first step, front-line officers and staff from the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) gang enforcement unit, gang intelligence unit, patrol, and tactical divisions held a roundtable meeting. Drawing on existing intelligence, they jointly identified known members of the Black Souls. Those individuals are represented by dark circles in Figure 4.

Using social network analysis (SNA), CPD then mapped other individuals who had been arrested with known members of the Black Souls in the last five years to identify any previously unknown group members.

Figure 4. Black Souls' social network

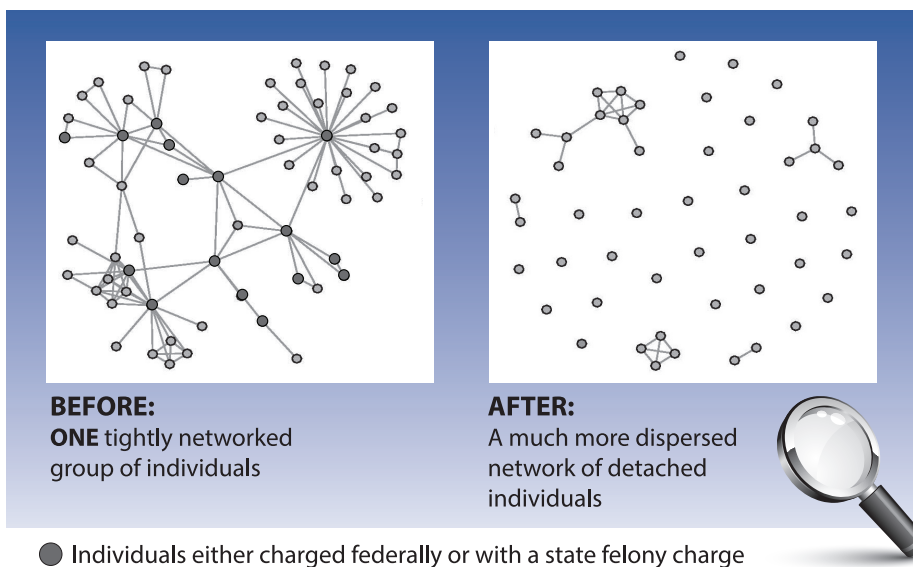


Source: Andrew Papachristos

Based on the list of names produced by the roundtable group, Andrew Papachristos of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, one of CPD's key research partners, created a two-degree network of associates. The first-degree network mapped the known group members with everyone CPD officers had arrested or contact-carded over the past five years. CPD then repeated this step of the process to identify additional associates (co-arrestees) of those in the first-degree network, thereby creating the two-degree network.

In Figure 5, the dark circles represent individuals not previously known to CPD as Black Souls and whom SNA identified as having the strongest network connections to known Black Souls. Papachristos sent their names back to the roundtable group for confirmation, and nine of the ten individuals were indeed associated with the group, adding to CPD's intelligence.

Figure 5. New Breeds' social network



Source: Andrew Papachristos

CPD has also applied SNA to assess the impact of its enforcement actions against groups in response to violence. By examining an illustration of a group's network before and after an enforcement action, CPD can assess whether it did in fact remove key members. Figure 5 represents a before-and-after example that clearly shows that the enforcement action against the New Breeds successfully broke off central network connections, making reorganization more difficult for the group.

C. Sample Call-In / Rehearsal Agenda

[Location]

February 24, 2013

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

15 minutes – Opening and set up

5 minutes – Moderator: Welcome and introductions

20 minutes – Law enforcement message

5 minutes – Police executive

5 minutes – District/state's attorney

10 minutes – Assistant U.S. attorney

3 minutes – Moderator: Transition

30 minutes – Community moral voices message

7 minutes – Violence victim: Discuss community pain

7 minutes – Grassroots leader: Discuss community aspiration

7 minutes (each) – Ex-offenders: Discuss redemption

3 minutes – Moderator: Transition

10 minutes – Social service provider message

3 minutes – Moderator: Closing message and adjourn

“Stop the violence. Put your guns down—you and your associates.”

Food and conversation

D. The Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence “Call-In”: Reflections on a Profound Experience

Michael Blass, a career law enforcement officer working for the Ohio Attorney General, wrote the following essay after observing the first call-in in Cincinnati, Ohio, on July 31, 2007.

I saw something profound today.

I saw the same players and actors, those nameless, faceless people who make up the good guys and the bad guys and the ordinary guys in any community. They are all different from one another, but they are mirror images of the players and actors in communities all across this nation. They have roles to play, these good guys, bad guys, and ordinary guys...and the roles are uniform and consistent throughout America's communities. But today those roles were played in a different script.

I saw something profound today.

I watched the confused faces of those we commonly call the bad guys—angry young men, almost exclusively African American, as they filed into a room full of criminal justice professionals, social service providers, and community members. I saw, with exceptional clarity, the fear in their eyes, the apprehension on their faces, soon replaced with seemingly awkward attempts to project confidence, indifference, in some cases, perhaps, hostility. But I saw angry, street-savvy young men who were caught off-guard and struggling to find a comfort zone in what must surely have felt to them like an artificial environment. As they settled into their seats, they attempted to coax from within themselves a more comfortable demeanor while their genuine discomfort collectively and silently resounded across the room. These angry young men, used to being in control in the incredibly brutal environment of the mean streets, were noticeably off-balance and unsure of themselves.

That was profound.

I watched as the first speaker, Dr. Victor Garcia, stood and addressed the group. He was the first to deliver this simple message: “The violence—the killing and the shooting—must stop.” He provided startling statistics that supported his claim that black men killing black men has the potential to destroy the black race. He spoke of his personal experiences as a trauma surgeon saving, and losing, the lives of young men and

women who are victims of violence. He told the angry young men that he loved them, that they have value to their community, and that they are better than their violent actions imply. It was clear that he wanted more for these familiar strangers than they seemed to want for themselves. I saw a few angry faces soften, almost imperceptibly.

That was profoundly interesting.

I watched as law enforcement, prosecutors, social service providers, and community members addressed the angry young men, most of whom were attentive if for no other reason than to satisfy their curiosity. The speakers talked about consequences resulting from remaining in a violent lifestyle, but they spoke just as eloquently and passionately—perhaps more so—about how to exit the cycle of violence. They offered assistance and expressed feelings of personal faith, community hope, and love for the angry young men.

I saw the faces of a few young men appear slightly less angry. I saw a few young men choke back tears. I saw in the eyes of a couple of young men the tears of a painful existence—the tears that come from the realization that reality and truth have just intersected within one’s consciousness; perhaps tears reflecting a recognition that they could dare to be hopeful about their future. I saw one young man raise his shackled hands above his head and exclaim “I never knew there was this much love out there... seriously, I never knew it.” I saw several young men openly express a desire for respite from the pressures of their violent lifestyle. With a shrug of his shoulder, feigning nonchalance, one of the most angry young men said, “I’d like to change because I’m getting older and I’d like to get away from the violence.” Nobody argued for the status quo. Not one young man tried to justify violence, or argue that change was impossible, futile, or that their situation was hopeless.

That is profoundly surprising.

I watched mothers bravely balance their own personal anger and grief on the scales of hope as they tearfully and painfully explained how their sons were murdered and how these murders have affected them, their families, and their communities. I heard mothers describe their experience of emotional survival in the company of the misery that comes with a parent outliving a child. I saw a few young men swallow hard and look away—but they couldn’t stop listening and couldn’t find a suitable distraction to escape the brutality of the truth these women spoke. I saw mothers speak through

tears, and I saw young men hang their heads, stare at the ceiling, or simply sit with eyes transfixed on these fearless and charitable women as their words cut mercilessly through the room.

That is profoundly different.

I watched the faces of the law enforcement officers assigned to accompany the young men. I saw a subtle yet measurable change on their faces as well. Over the course of a couple of hours, their facial expressions changed from those of cynicism or polite boredom to attention and curiosity. In a couple of instances, I saw those public servants struggle to control their emotions, just as I was. I suspect that those law enforcement officers, like me, have had their moments of living the lives of angry young men, too, albeit from a different vantage point than those they were there to protect or guard. Too much anger leads to many harmful emotions, the most common among the protectors probably being best described as hopeless exhaustion.

Regardless of our politics or our propensity for honest introspection, somewhere within us we all seek unity and healing. Long ago, we grew weary of living through the experiences of angry young men dying at our feet. I believe I saw recognition in the expressions of those law enforcement officers that maybe there are solutions to what we may have considered insolvable problems. Perhaps the seeds of change were planted in the fertile soil of public service today.

That is profoundly refreshing.

I saw former gang members, convicted murderers, drug dealers—those reformed men and women who now reach out to others as their penance for what they've taken in a previous, unrepentant life—speak passionately and eloquently, pleading with the young men to take the help being offered. I saw some of these former criminals weep for the soon-to-be lost young men and maybe in some way for themselves and then be embraced by society's elite, both literally and figuratively. The young men saw that, too, and I suspect the significance of that solitary, sincere, and meaningful demonstration of community was not lost on them. And I saw the change that is coming.

It is profound change.

I walked away from this experience transformed from an observer to a participant, born of a renewed sense of hope and the warmth of a newly sparked inner fire. I believe again—I believe that there is hope for the hopeless, healing for the angry, and justice for the community. I believe that lives are being changed and will be changed. I believe that we—the community in its purest form and finest sense—will prevail, through the certain challenges and general messiness that human interactions create, through the inevitable setbacks, and the new obstacles that success itself will bring. We will prevail; we will be stronger, wiser, and more united as a community and, perhaps, eventually, as a people.

This experience was profoundly meaningful.

E. Sample Press Releases

1. After the first call-in

This information could also be shared in the form of an op-ed piece or on fliers to be distributed in the community in question.

On [insert date], members from several groups operating in the City Park area were called to a meeting to hear about a new violence reduction strategy in Chicago.

While new to Chicago, this strategy has been deployed in communities across the nation for 15 years. Other communities have seen a 40 to 60 percent reduction in group-related homicides after implementing the strategy.

Similar meetings have become business as usual in many cities, including Boston, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Oakland, Nashville, Memphis, Seattle, and more than 40 others across the country. California, North Carolina, and New York have launched state efforts to move the technique to multiple cities. Los Angeles is following in Chicago's footsteps with its own street group meetings. Under the Bush administration, the U.S. Department of Justice actively promoted the meetings for the simple reason that they have proven to have a profound impact on serious crime. The strategy's meetings for group members have been shown, in a very careful, peer-reviewed, published evaluation, to lead to a 37 percent reduction in homicide in Chicago neighborhoods. Boston, where the approach originated 15 years ago, cut homicide by half citywide and decreased youth violence by two-thirds.

The idea behind the strategy is surprisingly simple—groups drive the overwhelming majority of homicides and shootings. Groups are easily identified, and invariably they have members on probation and parole. Those supervisees can be ordered to attend a meeting like the one in Garfield Park. There they are told three things: First, their own community hates the violence and wants it to stop. At the Garfield Park meeting, a family that had lost a son to homicide could not have been clearer or more moving. Second, they are offered help, if they will take it, and given a phone number that will activate a wide range of social services. Third, they are told that this is not a negotiation, and that the next group that kills someone will get comprehensive enforcement

attention to all crimes any of its members may be committing. Those who want that kind of attention should let their peers continue with their gunplay. Parolees at the meeting can be expected to carry that group-accountability message back to their groups. Their subsequent heated complaining shows that they understand the message clearly. However, group members cannot have life as group member both ways—they cannot be in the group when they feel like it and shed all responsibility for their groups' actions when they do not.

There are many reasons why people may think this strategy will not work, but the record now shows clearly that it does work. More than a decade of experience has shown that many group members listen to their own community; that many ask for help; and that, once groups believe violence will bring attention to the whole group, they police themselves. The approach has worked with more or less organized groups, like the traditional groups seen in Chicago; with disorganized crews, as many Chicago groups are becoming; with Asian groups; with Hispanic groups; with white groups in Glasgow, Scotland; and within the worst neighborhoods in Brazil. The approach has also routinely produced rapid reductions in homicide at rates of a third to a half.

This strategy must not be mistaken as law enforcement offering groups a deal. Nobody in law enforcement would do that. Rather, this strategy is a promise that violence will result in a stronger enforcement response than groups have been used to. If a group-involved homicide occurs and other members of that group are not committing crimes, they will be fine. If group members want out and choose to take the help they have been offered, or even just put their guns down, that is progress. If they listen to their own community, that is progress, too.

However, the meeting at Garfield Park clearly stated that the next shooting after the meeting will get a whole-group response (i.e., a group enforcement action). After the next killing and the subsequent group enforcement action, there will be another meeting, and group members will be asked, "Who wants to be next?" Those who want to be next can continue shooting and bring swift and certain sanctions down on their group. Those who heed their own community, want a way out, or simply have the common sense to put their guns down will not be the object of a group enforcement action.

2. After the second (or subsequent) call-in(s)

This information could also be printed on fliers and distributed in the community in question.

On [insert date], members from several gangs operating in the Garfield Park Area were called to a meeting to hear about a new violence reduction strategy in Chicago.

While new to Chicago, this strategy has been deployed in communities across the nation for 15 years. Other communities have seen a 40 to 60 percent reduction in gang-related homicides after implementing the strategy.

There were three core elements to the call-in:

1. Members of the community shared the pain that the violence causes. They let the gang members know their behavior was unacceptable and would not be tolerated anymore. They shared their aspirations for the community and concerns that too many of their own were dying. They cannot live with the violence anymore.
1. Attendees were offered help and were encouraged to get their peers to take advantage of help as well. They were given a special phone number that will get them expedited social services, including [insert details of what is available].
2. Attendees were told that, from the time of the meeting on, law enforcement will respond in a new way to homicides and gun violence in Garfield Park. Federal, state, and local law enforcement representatives told the gang members in no uncertain terms that the next gang-related homicide that occurred in District 11 would draw the full attention of law enforcement, including the Chicago Police Department; the U.S. Attorney; the State's Attorney; the Illinois Department of Corrections; parole and probation; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF); the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); and the U.S. Postal Service. The attendees were warned that the shooting would bring attention not only to the perpetrator but also to all members of his or her gang faction for any crimes they may be committing.
3. The first Garfield Park meeting was the beginning of a longer strategy. Other communities have found that large reductions in violence usually come only after gangs test the warning and the partnership demonstrates that it is serious—i.e.,

that it will deliver on its promise; that this is in fact the new way of doing business; and that it intends to fulfill the community's aspirations, the offer of help, and the commitment to a new way of deploying law enforcement with respect to gang homicide.

Since [insert date of second call-in], there have been seven homicides in the area. The first homicide positively tied to a gang faction operating in District 11 was the killing of John Doe on [insert date] at [insert time] in the 4000 block of W. Jackson. This homicide was the first to draw our attention.

Since that time, [insert number] members of the [insert name of gang] faction have been identified [recap all the enforcement actions taken]:

- [Insert number of gang members] were arrested on drug charges.
- [Insert number of gang members] were arrested on other charges.
- [Insert number of gang members] were found in violation of parole.

The focus was solely on the active members of this particular gang faction. Those who were not involved in illegal activity were not arrested or violated. No one's civil rights were violated. We, the Chicago Violence Reduction Strategy partnership, simply took a close look at the current activity of all members of the faction and acted on what we found.

Tonight, we are talking to other gang members in Garfield Park to share this information and to show them we are serious. They are also going to hear from members of their own community that the violence needs to stop, and they will be offered the opportunity to receive help in changing their lives from a local social service organization. They will be warned again that the next gang-related homicide following the conclusion of the meeting will receive the full attention of the law enforcement team, which includes federal, state, and local law enforcement partners.

Results from others communities show that this continued engagement with gang members is key to achieving violence reduction. Gangs will realize we are serious and begin to police themselves. There is every reason to hope that this is the beginning of a significant, new effort to prevent serious violence in Chicago and give the community what it is asking for.

F. GVI Effectiveness: What the Research Says

The Group Violence Intervention has accumulated a compelling record of accomplishment. The logic behind the approach does not permit the random assignment of experimental designs that would allow a decisive verdict; the approach is designed to operate wherever there is violence citywide, to influence the entire network of violent groups simultaneously and to amplify the effect of the intervention beyond those individuals and groups touched by it directly. Individual offenders, groups of offenders, and neighborhoods cannot usually be set aside and used as experimental controls. Nevertheless, the evidence of effectiveness is compelling.

A careful pre/post-evaluation of the pilot approach, Operation Ceasefire, in Boston found that youth homicide fell by two-thirds in the two years after Ceasefire was implemented and homicide among all ages citywide fell by about half at a time with no equivalent declines in 39 similar U.S. communities.⁹ Before Ceasefire started in 1996, Boston was averaging 100 homicides a year. By 1999, it was down to 31. Another evaluation looked for the statistical breakpoint in Boston's homicides and located it in June 1996, when Ceasefire was implemented.¹⁰

Minneapolis removed a street group called the Bogus Boyz in the first week of June 1997 and began face-to-face meetings with group members. In the summer of 1996, Minneapolis experienced 42 homicides; in the summer of 1997, it had only eight.¹¹ The U.S. Department of Justice program modeled on the Boston project—the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI)—produced significant impacts in High Point and Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and Portland, Oregon, in the late-1990s. In High Point, street violence was virtually eliminated, and homicides dropped from 15 to 2 from one year to the next. Winston-Salem's statistics indicated a steep decline in the use of firearms in violent crimes in targeted areas. In Portland, where the

9. Anthony Braga et al., "Problem-Oriented Policing, Deterrence, and Youth Violence: An Evaluation of Boston's Operation Ceasefire," *Journal of Research In Crime and Delinquency* 38 (2001): 195–226.

10. Anne Morrison Piehl et al., "Testing for Structural Breaks in the Evaluation of Programs," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 85 (2003): 195–226.

11. David Kennedy and Anthony Braga, "Homicide in Minneapolis: Research for Problem Solving," *Homicide Studies* 2, no. 3 (1998): 263–290.

focus was on youth gun and group violence, the data indicated a 74 percent reduction in drive-by shootings from 1995 to 2000. Homicide victims age 24 or under dropped by 82 percent during the same period.¹²

A growing body of quasi-experimental evaluations of the approach, as applied in other cities, found results remarkably similar to those of the original Boston Ceasefire intervention. Indianapolis, Indiana, used the strategy and found a citywide homicide reduction of slightly more than a third, with larger impacts in the neighborhoods and groups most affected by violence. Comparison cities in the region saw no such reductions.¹³ As in Boston, the impact was nearly immediate upon the commencement of face-to-face meetings. Braga et al. applied the strategy in Lowell, Massachusetts, and found a statistically significant reduction of 43.1 percent in combined gun homicide and assault and no equivalent reductions in seven comparison cities in Massachusetts or for the state as a whole.¹⁴ An application and formal evaluation in Stockton, California, with Hispanic groups showed a 42 percent reduction in homicide.¹⁵

An evaluation of even a poorly implemented intervention based on the Ceasefire model found a reduction in violent crime of about a third in the project neighborhoods in East Los Angeles.¹⁶ In Chicago, beginning in 2002 under the auspices of the federal Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative, criminologist Tracey Meares and her colleagues implemented a reentry variation of the strategy, focusing on individual parolees in a set of extremely violent neighborhoods, allowing them to use a more sophisticated evaluation design with other neighborhoods as controls. As the best evaluation of these interventions available to date, it found a 37 percent reduction in homicide, again with

12. Erin Dalton, "Lessons in Preventing Homicide," (Project Safe Neighborhoods Report, Michigan State University, December 2003), 52.

13. Edmund McGarrell et al., "Reducing Homicide through a Lever-Pulling Strategy," *Justice Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2006): 226.

14. A. A. Braga, J. McDevitt, and G.L. Pierce, "Understanding and Preventing Gang Violence: Problem Analysis and Response Development in Lowell, Massachusetts," *Police Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (2006): 20–46.

15. A.A. Braga and D.L. Weisburd, *Pulling Levers Focused Deterrence Strategies to Prevent Crime*, no. 6 of *Crime Prevention Research Review* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2012).

16. George Tita et al., *Reducing Gun Violence: Results from an Intervention in East Los Angeles* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003).

very rapid impact when the strategy was implemented.¹⁷ Subsequent work by Meares and her research team found dramatically lower recidivism for the offenders with whom her project intervened, along with improvements in perceptions of the legitimacy of law enforcement and of offenders' willingness to obey the law.¹⁸

Furthermore, in April 2012, a Campbell Collaboration Systematic Review, the gold standard in evaluating social science interventions, found “strong empirical evidence” for the effectiveness of the Group Violence Intervention.¹⁹

17. Andrew Papachristos, Tracey Meares, and Jeffrey Fagan, “Attention Felons: Evaluating Project Safe Neighborhoods in Chicago,” *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* 4, no. 2 (2007): 223–272.

18. For a summary of that research, see Tracey Meares and Andrew Papachristos, “Policing Gun Crime without Guns” (Social Science Electronic Publishing, Inc., 2009), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1326932>.

19. Anthony Braga and David Weisburd, *The Effects of “Pulling Levers” Focused Deterrence Strategies on Crime, Campbell Systematic Reviews* (The Campbell Collaboration, March 2012), www.nnscommunities.org/Braga_Pulling_Levers_Review_CAMPBELL_RECORD.pdf.

G. National Network for Safe Communities

The following list identifies member jurisdictions of the National Network as of September 30, 2013:

Arizona

Mesa

California

East Palo Alto

Fresno

Los Angeles

Long Beach

Oakland

Oxnard

Sacramento

Salinas

Stockton

Connecticut

Bridgeport

Hartford

New Haven

Florida

Ocala

Sarasota

Illinois

Chicago

Peoria

Rockford

Louisiana

New Orleans

Maryland

Baltimore

Snow Hill

Massachusetts

Boston

Michigan

Detroit

Flint

Kalamazoo

Missouri

Kansas City

Native American Communities

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Justice Services

San Carlos Apache Tribe

Nebraska

Omaha

New Jersey

Newark

New York

Hempstead

Mineola

Mount Vernon

White Plains

Yonkers

North Carolina

Concord

Durham

Graham

Greensboro

Greenville

High Point

Hillsborough

Salisbury

Shelby

Winston-Salem

Ohio

Canton

Cincinnati

Cleveland

Dayton

Middletown

Toledo

Oklahoma

Oklahoma City

Oregon

Portland

Pennsylvania

Lancaster

Pittsburgh

Rhode Island

Providence

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**National Network
For Safe Communities**
Saving Lives, Saving Communities

About the National Network for Safe Communities

The National Network for Safe Communities, a project of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, was launched in 2009 under the direction of John Jay College President Jeremy Travis and Professor David M. Kennedy, who serves as its director. The National Network supports cities implementing strategic interventions to reduce violence and improve public safety, minimize arrest and incarceration, strengthen communities, and improve relationships between law enforcement and the communities it serves.

Scores of American cities have implemented the National Network's strategies with powerful impact, particularly the Group Violence Intervention (GVI), first implemented as "Operation Ceasefire" in Boston in the mid-1990s, and the Drug Market Intervention (DMI), first implemented in High Point, North Carolina, in 2004.

Substantial research and field experience has proven that these interventions are associated with large reductions in violence and other serious crime. The National Network has also begun to adapt its approach to other contexts, such as strategic prosecution, reconciliation between law enforcement and distressed communities, and problems such as domestic violence and prison violence.

The National Network is committed to building a community of practice that operates along a set of guiding principles:

- **First, do no harm.** Too much incarceration, aggressive and disrespectful policing, and other missteps can damage individuals, families, and communities and undermine relationships between neighborhoods and law enforcement. Law enforcement should do its work in ways that do not cause that harm.
- **Strengthen communities' capacity to prevent violence.** Community norms and actions do most of the work of crime control. Community members can establish expectations for nonviolence and intervene directly with the few

people at the highest risk for violent victimization or offending through direct communication. Using this approach strengthens neighborhoods and keeps people out of jail.

- ♦ **Enhance legitimacy.** Most people obey the law because it is the right thing to do, not because they're afraid of being arrested. Communities need to see law enforcement, especially the police, as fair, respectful, and on their side. Police should conduct themselves in ways that model their caring and respect for the communities they serve. Where legitimacy goes up, crime goes down.
- ♦ **Offer help to those who want it.** Many of the people at highest risk for violent victimization or offending do not like how they are living and want a way out. Communities should meet them where they are and do everything possible to support them.
- ♦ **Get deterrence right.** When law enforcement needs to act, it's usually best to let offenders know that enforcement is coming so they can stop their offending, rather than to arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate them. The creative use of existing law, combined with direct communication with high-risk people, can make deterrence work and head off both violence and actual enforcement.
- ♦ **Use enforcement strategically.** When arrest, prosecution, and incarceration are necessary, law enforcement should use them as sparingly and tactically as possible. Law enforcement should apply the minimum that is compatible with ensuring public safety.

National Network membership includes community leaders, city officials, law enforcement, social service providers, street outreach workers, and many other representatives from cities dedicated to using these principles.

Please visit www.nnscommunities.org for detailed information on the National Network's mission, strategies, research findings, media coverage, events, and membership.



Community Oriented Policing Services

About the COPS Office

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community police and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Another source of COPS Office assistance is the Collaborative Reform Initiative for Technical Assistance (CRI-TA). Developed to advance community policing and ensure constitutional practices, CRI-TA is an independent, objective process for organizational transformation. It provides recommendations based on expert analysis of policies, practices, training, tactics, and accountability methods related to issues of concern.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 125,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.

- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.
- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

The COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—can be downloaded at www.cops.usdoj.gov. This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.

The National Network for Safe Communities' Group Violence Intervention (GVI) has repeatedly demonstrated that serious violence can be reduced when law enforcement, community members, and social service providers join together to engage directly with violent street groups and clearly communicate (1) a credible, moral message against violence; (2) a credible law enforcement message about the group consequences of further violence; and (3) a genuine offer of help for those who want it.

This publication provides comprehensive guidance on how to implement GVI step by step, discussing the role and responsibilities of the core representatives in law enforcement, the community, and social services. It explains the logic and basics of the strategy before taking the reader through the initial planning stages, design, and execution of all key strategy elements, such as problem analysis and the call-in. This guide also includes methods to maintain program integrity and ensure sustainability in the long-term.

This publication is part of a series by the National Network for Safe Communities about its two crime reduction strategies: Group Violence Intervention and Drug Market Intervention.



COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
145 N Street NE
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details about COPS Office programs, call
the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit COPS Office online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.



John Jay College of Criminal Justice
The City University of New York
524 West 59th Street
New York, NY 10019

www.jjay.cuny.edu

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