

LOCATION: Vallejo, California

REQUESTOR: Vallejo Police Department (VPD)

REQUEST: In 2016, the VPD requested assistance in evaluating violent and gun-related crime data and re-developing the department's intelligence and crime analysis capabilities.

Overview

As a result of Vallejo's 2008 city bankruptcy, the VPD experienced a downsizing of their sworn police force, in addition to losing support staff within records and analytic divisions. Since then, the department has focused on rebuilding their staffing and is progressing toward data-driven policing efforts. Recent efforts include reviving community watch groups and building partnerships with faith-based leaders, local business owners and other social service institutions.

Changes to the city's population and economic development contributed to the changes in crime and disorder. The city has experienced persistent violent crime rates (e.g., aggravated assaults). However, further analysis of these crimes (e.g., patterns, trends, offender-victim analysis) has been limited since the disbanding of VPD's analytical unit as a result of staffing cuts during the city's bankruptcy. The VPD requested assistance from the OJP Diagnostic Center to evaluate violent crime data to assist in understanding contributing factors and provide guidance on crime patterns and trends for policing strategies and responses. Additionally, VPD requested support for re-establishing their crime analysis capabilities with existing personnel.

First, the Diagnostic Center used a mixed-methods approach to understand crime and disorder. Interviews with representatives from the district attorneys' office, VPD, local government departments (e.g., technology, housing, code), and community members (e.g., faith-based leaders) indicated varying levels of awareness and responsibility to the crime and disorder within the city. Analysis of available data for calls for service and reported crimes assisted in identifying opportunities to enhance VPD's strategy to address crime within the community.

The Diagnostic Center conducted 25 semi-structured interviews with law enforcement, key members of city and county governments and members of the public health system, to identify thematic trends relating to violent crime and data processes. In addition, the Diagnostic Center analyzed data for calls for service (CFS), reported crime, housing vouchers, neighborhood watch groups, probationer locations and land use records to identify locations and/or persons contributing to violent crimes.

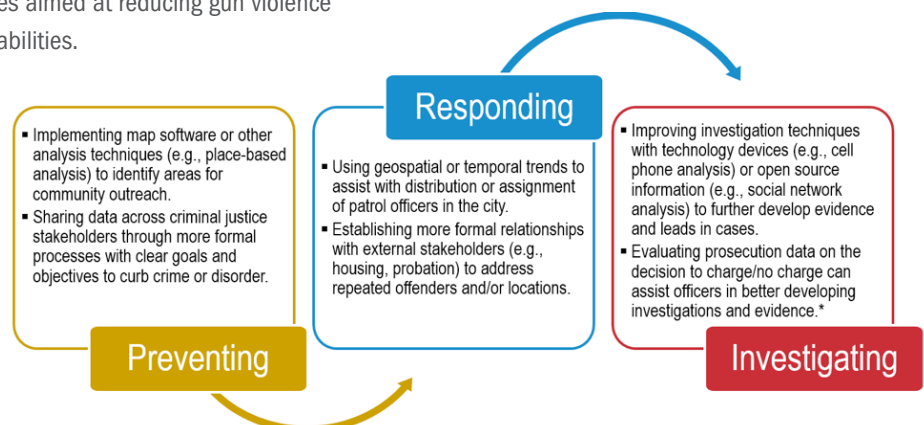
Second, the Diagnostic Center focused on methods for building crime analysis capabilities to assist in police responses. An evaluation of data collection practices and overall reporting determined areas to improve VPD's use of current technology platforms. The Diagnostic Center also reviewed department training logs, policies and practices to ensure recommendations aligned with the department's objectives and training schedule.

Once the in-depth Diagnostic Analysis was complete, the Diagnostic Center matched a series of recommendations and trainings to address the VPD's needs and presented its findings and recommendations to the community.

Priorities

- Enhance data collection, quality and use
- Improve the use of analysis to identify the best investigative approach for officers
- Implement effective evidence-based strategies aimed at reducing gun violence
- Identify resources for building analytical capabilities.

Interview participants expressed different ideas on solutions to the department's core roles of preventing, responding and investigating crimes.





Diagnostic Center Findings

- Gaps of data entry and quality within reporting systems to provide information for analysis.
- Limited end-user knowledge on the purpose, capacity and limitations of record and lower case management and solutions and other data sources.
- No policies or processes established to support analytic functions that ensure information sharing both internally and externally.
- Limited or lack of formal review of data at command or operational levels hinders the development of data-driven strategies past a reactive policing approach
- Data loss or integrity issues contribute to low end-user perceptions on data quality and importance of use.
- Similar to national trends, a majority of calls for service (CFS) are for non-criminal concerns from residents and businesses. The increase of CFS for VPD may result from increased community outreach and engagement in recent years. This influx, combined with a historically low number of communications center staff (as of October 2016), may cause varying levels of quality data for analysis and evaluation of VPD resource demands.
- Violent crimes occurring at schools may be an ideal problem-solving project for VPD to initiate, leveraging community resources and other stakeholders to reduce offenses.
- Crime occurring in concentrated shopping areas (e.g., downtown Vallejo) may be positively impacted through targeted traffic enforcement and presence.

The Vallejo Police Department recognizes that agencies today must build relationships in their communities based on trust. Agencies can enhance that core function by using quality data to make strategic policing decisions. We believe our partnership with the OJP Diagnostic Center will help us maintain and strengthen our relationships and help us improve public safety at the same time.

- Chief Andrew Bidou

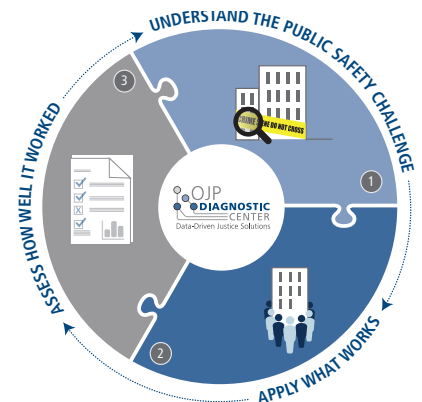


Diagnostic Center Recommendations

- Improve VPD’s data collection and quality through the review, implementation and monitoring of data management systems
- More information sharing across police and justice agencies
- Develop and implement violent crime reduction strategies including geospatial and temporal analysis of service demands to drive manpower allocation, and enhanced investigative tools
- Build and enhance VPD’s analytical processes and data-driven strategies

What is the Diagnostic Center?

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs Diagnostic Center is a resource designed to provide customized assistance to law enforcement and communities in order to address persistent and emerging public safety problems using evidence-based strategies. This assistance builds local capacity for data-driven decision-making, ensuring that limited local resources are invested wisely and federal assets are leveraged where they are needed most. The Diagnostic Center’s work is driven by local needs and priorities focused on improving public safety and officer safety and wellness.



Contact the Diagnostic Center:

www.ojpdagnosticcenter.org

contact@OJPDagnosticCenter.org

@OJPDc

(855) 657-0411

facebook.com/ojpd