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Data-Driven Justice Solutions

CASE STUDY

Reducing Violent Crime Though Improved Law Enforcement Strategies and Building Community Relations

Location:
Gary, Indiana

Organization:
The City of Gary, IN and Gary (IN) Police Department (GPD)

Description of the organization:
City-wide police department with approximately 220 law enforcement personnel, serving a population of approximately 85,000

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Data-driven Programs and Practices Recommended to Address the Issue

• Increase Homicide Clearances
• Enhance Data-driven Decision Making

Overview

Faced with rising numbers of homicides—even though violent crime numbers were down—increasing media attention about the safety of Gary residents and economic challenges impacting the city's capacity to address public safety, Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson reached out to the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Diagnostic Center in January 2013 for assistance. The City of Gary, IN requested help in identifying and implementing data-driven strategies that target factors contributing to homicides and youth-related violent crime.

The Diagnostic Center worked with GPD and the City of Gary to assess crime issues and to determine the GPD's and the City of Gary's operational capability. Partnering with local, state and federal organizations, the Diagnostic Center talked with a broad range of law enforcement, academic and government organizations to determine both the challenges and possible models for response. Indiana University Northwest, Indiana State Police, the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Indiana, numerous federal and local law enforcement agencies, task forces and a variety of community groups and citizens all had input into the assessment and recommendation effort.

After completing the in-depth Diagnostic Analysis, the Diagnostic Center matched a series of recommendations and data-driven models to address the City of Gary's needs and presented its findings and recommendations to the community.

The Diagnostic Center

The Diagnostic Center is a technical assistance resource provider designed to build community capacity to use data to make short- and long-term evidence-based decisions about criminal justice and public safety. Diagnostic Center engagements enhance the ability of public safety executives to collect and use local data to understand the jurisdiction's issues, make decisions about programs and practices and support efforts to integrate data and evidence into policies. The Diagnostic Center invests in what works by bridging the gap between data and criminal justice policy at the state, local and tribal levels.

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• Diagnostic Center convenes community stakeholders and subject matter experts to:
  - define problem and desired outcomes
  - identify sources of data that illuminate strengths and challenges in the community
	• Diagnostic Center helps the community:
	  - examine the evidence-based data
	  - identify and implement data-driven programs
		• Diagnostic Center helps the community adopt data collection strategies to measure the effectiveness of the programs put in place during the engagement

The Diagnostic Process

After being contacted by the City of Gary, the Diagnostic Center began its three step process to help them better understand the contributors to violent crime. During the Diagnose Phase, the Diagnostic Specialists collected and analyzed local data to assess the public safety issue and then aligned the findings to

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promising practices with demonstrated success in reducing crime. That analysis uncovered six factors contributing to the City and Police Department's challenge in addressing violent crime.

Six Factors Contributing to the Issue

1. **Low confidence in law enforcement** – Community perceptions of high crime, even as overall violent crime was falling, limited police effectiveness and reduced information sharing with investigators about criminal activity.

2. **Limited community-police engagement** – Limited community participation in public safety strategies and resource deployment not aligned with areas of greatest need created strained community-police relations.

3. **Untargeted crime response strategies** – The violent crime patterns in Gary highlight a need to target and focus response strategies.

4. **Organization barriers** – Turnover in department leadership, shifting management priorities and limited key management systems impede department's ability to implement new strategies and guide GPD operations.

5. **Lack of a strategic public safety plan** – Deployment of resources in Gary are not linked to a strategic public safety plan. The lack of a strategic public safety plan limits city's ability to seek community buy-in to its approach, link strategies to proven crime theories and report on strategies' performance.

6. **Limited use of data collection and analysis** – Limited and incomplete data collection and analytical capabilities restrict the department's capacity for robust analysis needed to design and implement needed crime response strategies.

Descriptions and Details of the Recommended Evidence-based Programs and Practices

Increase Homicide Clearances

Agencies that are successful at clearing homicide rates employ both (1) strategies (direction for the way a task is approached and decisions are made) and (2) tactics (what and how activities will be performed) to increase homicide clearances.

While homicide clearance rates vary for many reasons, there are common characteristics among successful agencies including: (1) capability of agency and investigators, (2) investment of time and effort to build trust with community and (3) willingness to raise the standard for performing investigative tasks and resources. In addition, successful agencies recognize the vital importance of the first 48 hours of homicide investigation work and the

Figure 1. Functions of Each Time Interval in the First 48 Hours, from BJA's Homicide Process Mapping

critical series of steps to ensure the best opportunity for a thorough and successful investigation. Effective investigations that are cleared by an arrest may also eliminate repeat offenders and potentially reduce the number of retaliation homicides.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Homicide Process Mapping (see Figure 1) identifies key strategic and tactical initiatives and practices to increase homicide clearances. BJA interviewed investigators and agency leadership from seven agencies with at least 24 homicides and a clearance rate greater than 80 percent in 2011. BJA reviewed agency practices, protocols and policies to inform the process mapping.

In addition, BJA's companion piece, International Association of Chiefs of Police's (IACP's) Ten Things Law Enforcement Executives Can Do to Positively Impact Homicide Investigation Outcomes, identifies key steps for executives including performance indicators and the importance of building trust with the community.
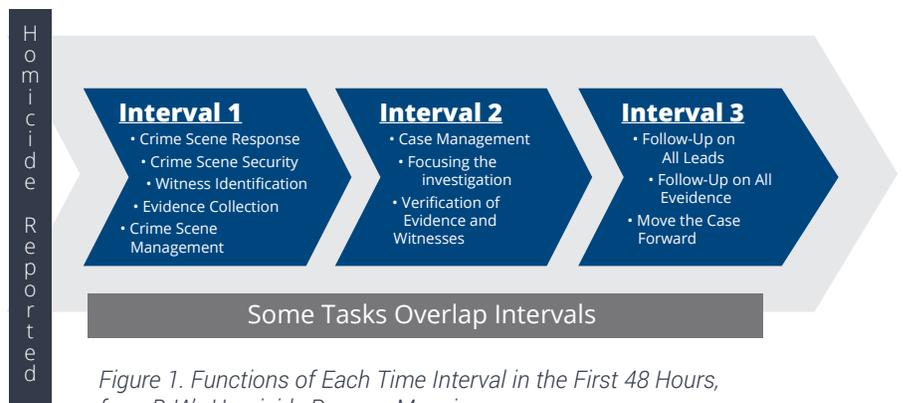
Enhance Data-driven Decision-Making

This practice leverages data capture systems and technology to support analysis that identifies the areas of highest demand for and impact on resources. Data analysis allows departments to do several things, including:

- Identify areas for differential or alternative police response strategies to allow for more effective deployment of existing resources (see Figure 2)
- Develop strategies to use uncommitted time to maximize proactive policing efforts, such as incorporating problem-oriented policing projects into operations
- Evaluate calls that place high demand on resources to determine policy implications (e.g., false alarms, non-injury accident response protocols)
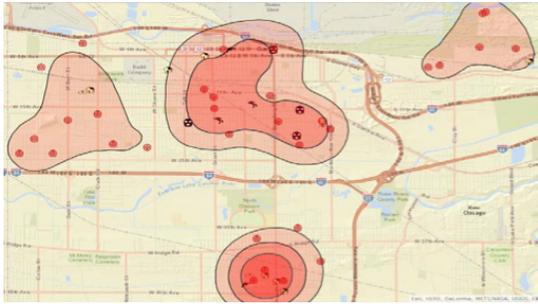

Figure 2. An Example of a Hot Spot Map, Gary, Indiana from CPTED Report
Courtesy of Corporal Drummond, Crime Analyst, Gary Police Department

Focused data analysis allows law enforcement to work with and incorporate affected community members in developing public safety approaches and priorities as well as identifying what constitutes success. Community anchor institutions and appropriate government agencies work collaboratively and in coordination with law enforcement to provide other needed services. Using a targeted data-driven approach—that includes community engagement—can help build confidence and trust in law enforcement.

> **IACP's 9 Things Law Enforcement Executives Can Do to Positively Impact Homicide Investigation Outcomes**
>
> 1. Invest in your relationship with your homicide unit
> 2. Have a system in place for standardized and structured management of investigations
> 3. Mandate information sharing
> 4. Support investigations with appropriate resources
> 5. Assess your current response to victims/survivors
> 6. Build up/reinforce your partnerships
> 7. Build community cachet and give them options
> 8. Manage political and public expectations of homicide investigations
> 9. Know your numbers

Diagnostic Center's Recommendations

- Develop and implement a data-driven community safety and crime reduction strategy
  - º Develop violent crime response and crime prevention strategies using community-oriented approaches
  - º Improve community-police communication
  - º Align police operational and administrative systems and structure with and support of violent crime strategies
- Enhance capacity to use data-driven decision-making
  - º Enhance data use, quality and management
  - º Establish training initiatives to support implementation of complex policing activities, use of data and police legitimacy
  - º Use data to help engage community members and anchor groups and collaborate on community safety and crime reduction strategies

Community's Response and Actions Taken

During the summer of 2014, the City of Gary and the GPD launched their comprehensive community safety and violent crime reduction strategy called Gary for Life. Gary for Life is based on four pillars: law enforcement, rehabilitation, intervention and prevention. The city is working with a broad coalition to address violence prevention including government organizations, local community groups, faith-based organizations, community members and several federal initiatives such as Strong Cities Stronger Communities (SC2), My Brother's Keeper and the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice (NI).

Working through the Diagnostic Center's process, the city and the GPD are concentrating implementation activities on law enforcement training and technical assistance.

The Diagnostic Center arranged for a variety of trainings at little or no cost for the GPD including Crime Analysis on Demand, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), VALOR training (an officer safety and resiliency program), media relations training, training on managing major crime scenes and detailed assessment of the homicide process. GPD will also participate in Leading by Legacy training with the International Association of Chiefs of Police in the fall 2016.

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With support from the Diagnostic Center, a team from Gary participated in the National Network for Safe Communities' Ceasefire University to assist in building jurisdiction capacity. This lead to the city's designation as an NI pilot site. As a pilot site, GPD is receiving assistance in providing procedural justice, implicit bias and reconciliation training for its officers and in the future for the community.

Impact and Outcome:

In the time since the City of Gary and GPD began implementing the Diagnostic Center's recommendations, the city has begun seeing qualitative results and expect to be able to document quantifiable outcomes. Preliminary actions the city has taken include:

- Fostering law enforcement's leadership's capacity to implement contemporary law enforcement strategies and police in the 21st century
- Developing Gary for Life — a comprehensive approach to addressing community safety and violence prevention
- Engaging key community stakeholders to address community safety and violence prevention efforts through participation in the Gary for Life effort
- Providing VALOR training to patrol officers designed to improve the immediate and long-term safety, wellness and resiliency of law enforcement
- Participating in three-day onsite CPTED training
- Participating in CPTED on-site assessment to discuss connection between environmental factors and public safety
- Developing a GPD communication strategy with an increased use of social media
- Participating in three-day IACP Leading by Legacy training for police management
- Increasing GPD's leadership capacity to understand critical factors of policing in today's environment including use of task forces
- Participating in Homicide Investigations assessment
- Participating in Major Crime Scene Investigations training
- Participating in Ceasefire University with John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- Identifying as a pilot site for NI

The community's implementation is a work in progress. Ad hoc meetings with community organizations, city officials, and faith-based leaders explored ways to move forward with ongoing community input and participation.

Insight Gained

Engaging the entire community of stakeholders – government, law enforcement, business, community groups and private citizens – is critical to addressing violent crime in a comprehensive way. The City of Gary invited the public to put forward their ideas and discuss the benefits and challenges associated with various strategies. Working as a team and using Gary for Life as the framework, the community will begin addressing crime in a comprehensive way including economic development, rehabilitation and prevention and environmental issues.

"It's not just the corporate community. It's not just small businesses or large businesses. It's not just our work as it relates to the faith community, because they are actively involved...It's all of us working together."

–Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson

Data makes the difference and provides opportunity to build community relations. Having data to show the connections, focus strategy development, identify needed key stakeholders, track progress and identify gaps is critical to understanding the problem and crafting the most appropriate solutions. Improving and integrating data collection and analysis in decision-making is vital to sound implementation.

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