

PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

One Year Progress Report



Recommitment to a Proven Violence Reduction Strategy

Figure 1: Findings from the Michigan State University Project Safe Neighborhoods Evaluation



In October 2017, the Department of Justice reinvigorated its nationwide violent crime reduction program, Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). Drawing from academic research and decades of experience, the program is based on the fundamental principle that law enforcement agencies and communities must work together to address violent crime to make our neighborhoods safer.

PSN is an evidence-based violent crime reduction program that takes a collaborative approach to public safety. It leverages law enforcement and community partnerships, along with strategic enforcement efforts, to focus on the most violent criminals in the most violent locations. Independent academic research found that PSN successfully reduced violent crime by an average of 4–20 percent, with reductions as high as 42 percent in certain locations (Figure 1).¹

In 2017, the Department enhanced its PSN program, emphasizing data-driven strategies that focus on the most violent offenders, new technologies, and above all, partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders in local communities. With these changes, the program will be more effective than ever to help make America safer.

Project Safe Neighborhoods Program Elements

PSN is a community-based violence reduction strategy in which each local program is designed to address the specific violent crime problem in each district. Every U.S. Attorney across the country is implementing a PSN program tailored to the needs of his or her district. While the specific focus and implementation vary across the country, every PSN program has five common elements (Figure 2):

Figure 2: Five Elements of Every Project Safe Neighborhoods Program

- 1. LEADERSHIP** by the U.S. Attorney to convene all partners;
- 2. PARTNERSHIPS** at all levels of law enforcement and with the community;
- 3. TARGETED** enforcement efforts that:
 - Utilize the full range of available data, methods, and technologies to identify the offenders driving violent crime rates in the most violent locations in the district;
 - Ensure prosecution of those offenders in the federal, state, local or tribal system - whichever provides the most certain and appropriate sanction;
- 4. PREVENTION** of additional violence by prioritizing efforts such as:
 - Ensuring public awareness of the violent crime reduction strategy and enforcement results;
 - Communicating directly to offenders about the consequences of continuing violent behaviors; and
 - Supporting locally based prevention and reentry efforts; and
- 5. ACCOUNTABILITY** for results based on outcome (reduction in violent crime), not merely output (numbers of investigations or prosecutions).

***Our goal is not to maximize the number of criminal defendants.
Our objective is to minimize the number of crime victims.***

Rod J. Rosenstein, Deputy Attorney General, December 5, 2018

¹ Edmund F. McGarrell, et al., *Project Safe Neighborhoods - A National Program to Reduce Crime: Final Project Report at 140-41, 184 (2009)*; Edmund F. McGarrell, et al., *Promising Strategies for Violence Reduction: Lessons from Two Decades of Innovation, Project Safe Neighborhoods Case Study Report #13, at 6 (2013)*.



Implementation and Accomplishments (October 2017-September 2018)

Under PSN, each district has one or more target areas in which it focuses PSN's comprehensive violence reduction efforts. Twice a year, every U.S. Attorney's Office reports on its PSN activities and accomplishments for each target area.² At the conclusion of the first year of the reinvigorated PSN program, all 93 U.S. Attorney's Offices have implemented PSN programs, which focus on 187 target areas. Approximately 41 percent of districts have more than one target area (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Project Safe Neighborhoods Target Areas Nationwide



Leadership

U.S. Attorneys and their offices provide critical leadership for PSN initiatives and help build and sustain cross-sector partnerships to support PSN programs. There are several key markers of successful leadership by U.S. Attorneys during the first year of implementation of the reinvigorated PSN program:

- Every U.S. Attorney's Office reported at least one strategy development activity. Districts most often gathered relevant crime data (94 percent) and analyzed that data (91 percent).
- Every U.S. Attorney's Office reported at least one enforcement prioritization activity. Districts most often increased federal prosecutorial resources for violent crime reduction activities (92 percent) and worked with local law enforcement (94 percent) and local prosecution offices (84 percent) to dedicate more resources for violent crime reduction.
- Nearly every U.S. Attorney's Office (96 percent) reported at least one training and technical assistance (TTA) coordination activity and two-thirds (66 percent) identified TTA for local partners.

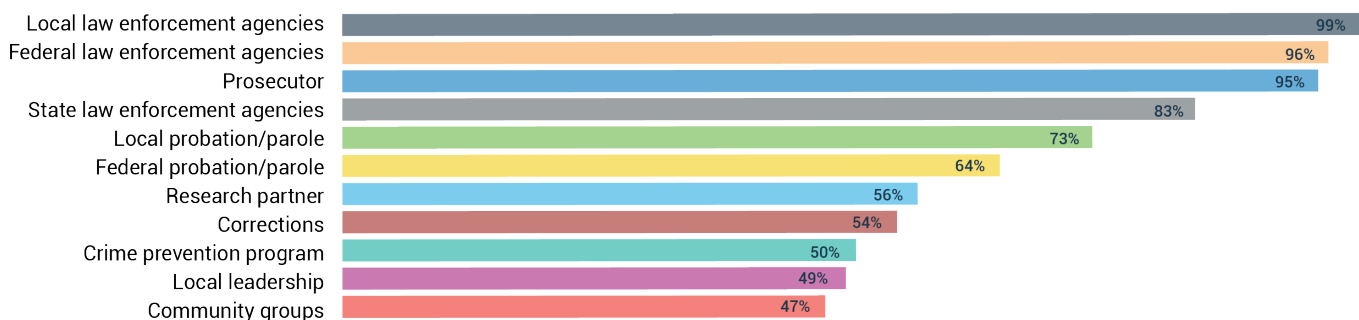
Figure 4: Indicators of Strong U.S. Attorney's Office Leadership



Partnerships

PSN is most successful at reducing violent crime when it involves partners—including federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement; prosecutors; elected leaders; and community leaders and groups—who share a high level of commitment to, and involvement in, the program.³ One year after the Department reinvigorated PSN, 79 percent of PSN target areas have task forces in place, 56 percent of which meet at least on a monthly basis. The vast majority of PSN task forces across the country work in partnership with a wide array of committed partners (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Most Common Active Partners in the 148 Project Safe Neighborhoods Task Forces Established Across the Country



² The figures in this report were drawn from U.S. Attorney's Offices' responses for the April-September 2018 reporting period, which reflect the status of the programs approximately one year after the launch of the reinvigorated PSN program.

³ McGarrell, et al., (2009) at 18-19, 169.



Targeted Enforcement

Targeting PSN enforcement efforts in the places that most need violent crime intervention is key to successful outcomes.⁴ The reinvigorated PSN program builds on this principle by leveraging advances in research, crime analysis, and technology to identify and focus on the most violent offenders who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of violence. During the first year of the reinvigorated PSN program, districts used a variety of data-driven models to target and prioritize enforcement efforts. They most frequently reported using focused deterrence (concentrating on high-rate offenders), hot spots policing (focusing on high crime places), and pulling levers (focusing on high-rate offender groups) (Figure 6).

Districts frequently ensure that the most violent offenders are prosecuted by enhancing screening and/or review of matters referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office (90 percent); enhancing referral and coordination protocols with state, local, or tribal prosecutors (85 percent); and using an internal case management system (CaseView) to track PSN matters and cases (79 percent).

Figure 6: Percentage of Target Areas Engaging in the Three Most Prevalent Enforcement Activities

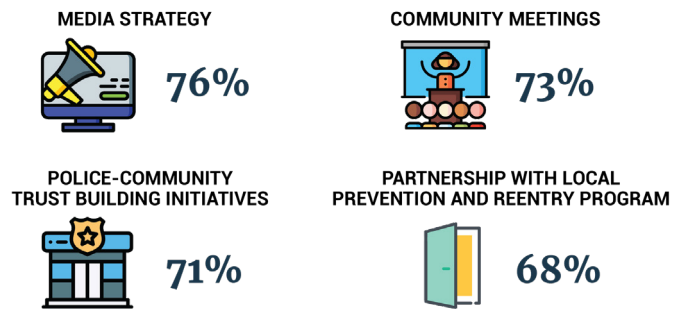


Prevention

While enforcement is a cornerstone of violence reduction—and the one most closely aligned with the Department's prosecutorial mission—the comprehensive PSN violence reduction program includes prevention and deterrence efforts to sustain reductions in violent crime. To effectively reduce violent crime on a local level, law enforcement agencies must have the buy-in of the communities in which they operate. Accordingly, public awareness and support of the local PSN program is key. PSN programs should incorporate and support local prevention and reentry efforts to prevent added violence.

During the first year of the reinvigorated PSN program, districts engaged in a variety of prevention activities, including those focused on proactive community outreach and targeted reentry services. Nearly every target area (92 percent) used at least one prevention strategy and nearly three quarters (73 percent) reported frequently using at least one prevention strategy. The most prevalent prevention activities of the first year of the reinvigorated program are displayed in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Percentage of Target Areas Reporting the Four Most Prevalent Prevention Activities



Accountability

The Department must be able to demonstrate and measure the effectiveness of PSN. This requires that the Department assess the impact of PSN nationwide, using measures that reflect the overall goals of the program. As a baseline, every local PSN program should seek to reduce violent crime, and to the extent possible, U.S. Attorney's Offices should track violent crime data in the targeted locations in real time. Tracking the number of prosecutions, both at the federal level and those referred to local prosecutors, may be useful to gauge productivity and track enforcement outcomes. It may also be useful to track prevention, reentry, and community engagement activities.

Highlights of Project Safe Neighborhoods Successes

There are many examples of early successes of PSN programs across the country that have significantly reduced violent crime rates.⁵

Northern District of Indiana

During the first year of the revitalized PSN program, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and prosecutors identified and prosecuted groups of individuals responsible for the violence in the target areas. These enforcement efforts were undertaken in tandem with community partnerships and programs to prevent additional crime

through targeted outreach, call-in meetings, and social services support. In Gary, shootings are down 21 percent, homicides are down 16 percent, and total violent crime rate is down 20.5 percent, according to the FBI's 2017 Uniform Crime Reporting data. In South Bend, shootings between the most violent groups targeted by their program decreased by 24 percent.⁶

⁴McGarrell, et al., (2009) at 16, 170-171, 174-177.

⁵Wherever possible, the statistics in this section of the report have been updated to reflect more recent crime data than what was available at the time of the cited press releases.

⁶Department of Justice. (October 12, 2018). U.S. Attorney Thomas L. Kirsch II Announces Progress in Making our Communities Safer through Project Safe Neighborhoods [Press Release].



Eastern District of Kentucky

In January 2018, federal, state, and local partners created the Fayette County Violent Crime Task Force, a joint effort to combat violent crime and drug trafficking in Lexington. The Task Force was formed as part of the PSN initiative, which focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and coordinates with locally based prevention and reentry programs to achieve lasting reductions in crime. At the end of the first year, violent crime in Lexington decreased by 13 percent, as compared to 2017. This decrease included declines in homicides by 21 percent, robberies by 21 percent, aggravated assaults by 11 percent, and shootings by 23 percent. Additionally, shots fired calls decreased by 9 percent.⁷



Southern District of Mississippi

Throughout the past year, the U.S. Attorney's Office has partnered with all levels of law enforcement, faith-based organizations, non-profits, neighborhood associations, and members of the community to reduce violent crime and make its neighborhoods safer for everyone. The violent crime rate in the City of Jackson fell 7 percent between December 2017 and December 2018. During this same period, there were 43 fewer carjackings (down 49 percent); 19 fewer rapes (down 17 percent) and 43 fewer armed robberies (down 9 percent).⁹



Eastern District of Michigan

By utilizing available data and advances in technology, the PSN Task Force has been able to identify offenders who are driving violent crime rates in certain areas of Detroit. The district has also adopted a unified approach, working in partnership with a large community of stakeholders to reduce violent crime. In Detroit's 8th Precinct, the PSN program's target area, fatal and non-fatal shootings have continued a downward trend that began in 2017. The first six months of 2018 witnessed a 20 percent decline.⁸



Eastern District of Virginia

In the PSN target areas in Richmond, through year end 2018, violent crime is down 22 percent, homicides are down 46 percent, aggravated assaults using firearms are down 44 percent, and robberies using firearms are down 20 percent. Citywide, through year end 2018, violent crime is down 8 percent, homicides are down 20 percent, aggravated assaults using firearms are down 12 percent, and robberies using firearms are down 44 percent.¹⁰

Resources to Support Project Safe Neighborhoods

The Department has dedicated the full complement of its resources to support successful implementation of the reinvigorated PSN program.

- In fiscal year 2018, the Department awarded over \$27.7 million in grant funds to support PSN programs across the country.¹¹ Since the Department reinvigorated and recommitted to PSN in October 2017, the Department has awarded millions of dollars in other grant funds to support related crime reduction activities, including Crime Gun Intelligence Centers and technology and equipment for law enforcement.
- The Department has \$3 million in TTA resources dedicated exclusively to supporting PSN programs across the country. In 2018, the Department also created the Violent Crime Response Center to connect state, local, and tribal justice agencies with the Department's violent crime reduction TTA resources.¹²
- The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives has established innovative Crime Gun Intelligence Centers in each of its 25 field divisions across the country and is expanding the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) Urgent Trace Program and NIBIN National Correlation and Training Center to more quickly process ballistics information and disseminate actionable leads that expedite the identification, investigation, arrest, and prosecution of active trigger-pullers.
- The Department has also hosted national conferences for PSN teams across the country and for PSN Coordinators; developed webinars, publications, and other resources to support implementation; and established the PSN Support Team to enhance communication between the Department leadership and the field.

⁷ Department of Justice. (February 28, 2019). *Law Enforcement Officials Announce Recent Results in Effort to Reduce Violent Crime in Lexington* [Press Release].

⁸ Department of Justice. (October 10, 2018). *U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider Announces Progress in Making our Communities Safer through Project Safe Neighborhoods* [Press Release].

⁹ Department of Justice. (October 11, 2018). *U.S. Attorney Mike Hurst Announces Significant Progress in Making Our Communities Safer through Project Safe Neighborhoods and Project EJECT* [Press Release].

¹⁰ Department of Justice. (October 5, 2018). *Crime Reduction and Community Safety: Project Safe Neighborhoods 2.0* [Press Release].

¹¹ Bureau of Justice Assistance. *Revised FY 2018 Project Safe Neighborhoods Funding Allocation Amounts*.

¹² Bureau of Justice Assistance. *Violence Reduction Response Center*.