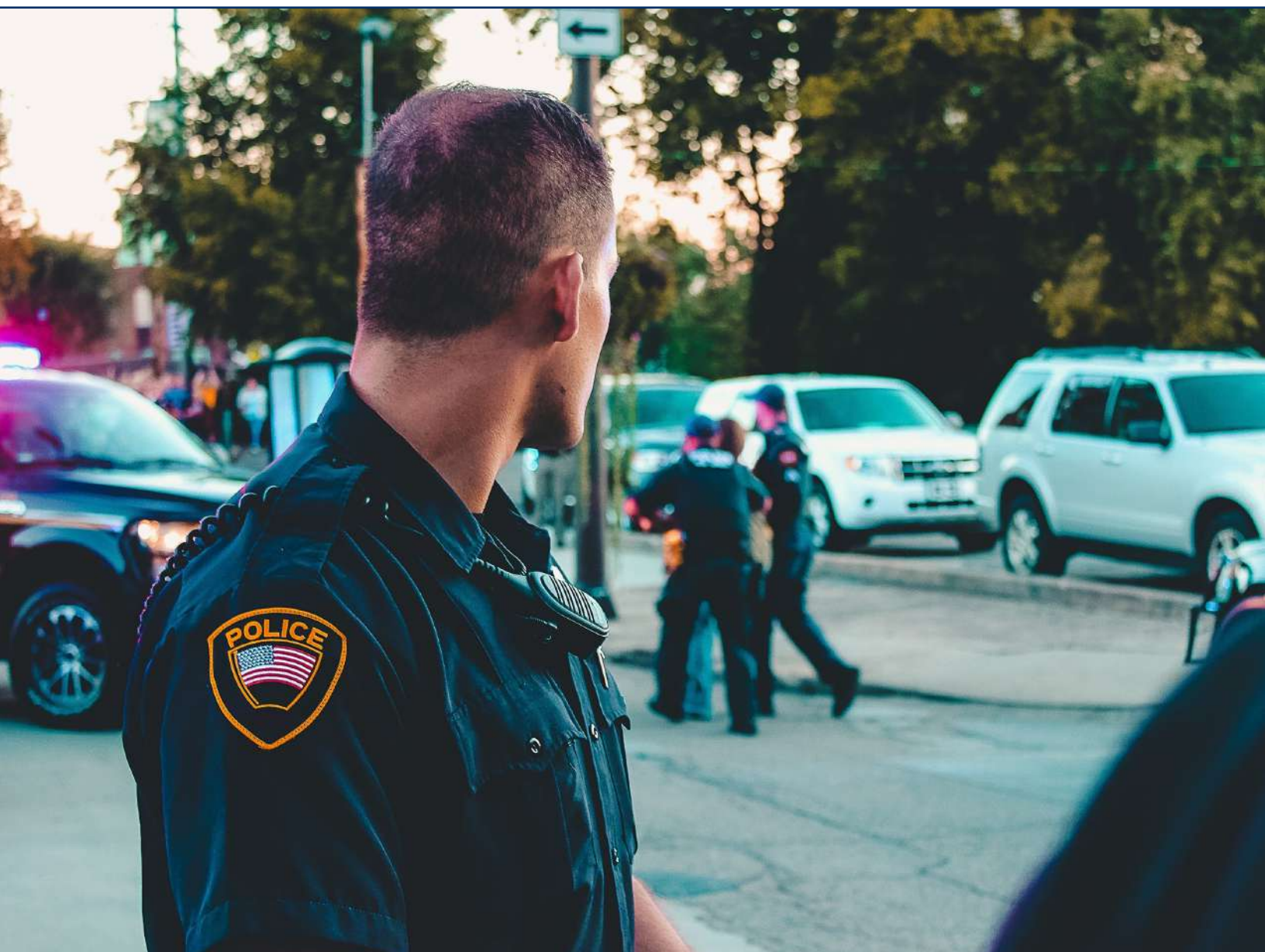




# A SURVEY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS TO GUIDE VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGIES AND PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS



A Survey of Law Enforcement in Central Illinois to Guide Violence Reduction Strategies and  
Project Safe Neighborhoods

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Background**

Little systematic study of nonfatal shootings, gun homicides and aggravated assaults in Illinois areas outside of Chicago make it difficult to apply the broader knowledge base surrounding violence reduction strategies in smaller communities, who may face their own unique violent crime challenges. Still, existing knowledge from across the globe on effectively reducing violent crime can be useful if the fundamentals are carefully adapted to local contexts. This fundamental knowledge points to a comprehensive approach for reducing violent crime that spans prevention, intervention, and suppression activities (Alderden, 2017) at multiple levels of the social environment (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). Challenges in applying knowledge about violence reduction in individual communities include a lack of actionable information about the characteristics of violence (Reuter, 2017; Saunders, Robbins, & Ober, 2017), confusion about key components of promising program models (Gleicher, 2017), and an absence of context-specific implementation guidance (McGarrell, et al., 2018).

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) provides funding and a framework to develop effective violence reduction strategies via data analysis, problem-solving, cross-agency partnerships, and assessment (Ashcroft, 2001). PSN's framework for strategy development promotes activities that in the past have led to successful violent crime reductions in Boston (Ceasefire) (Braga & Weisburd, 2012) and Chicago (Cure Violence) (Papachristos, Meares, & Fagan, 2007; Skogan, Hartnett, Bump, & Dubois, 2009). While such initiatives implemented slightly different strategies, they both incorporated a comprehensive problem-solving process that included local observations about crime characteristics, research evidence, extensive partners/collaborators, a targeted focus, and program assessment.

### **Study Description**

PSN funding supports the development of local, tailored initiatives to reduce gun and gang violence. In November 2018, ICJIA conducted an online survey of 68 police and sheriff departments in Illinois' Central region about violent crime in partnership with Central Illinois PSN's leadership team. The survey was designed to supplement existing information about the characteristics of violent crime, involvement of guns and gangs in violent crime, and law enforcement efforts to reduce violent crime.

### **Key Findings**

The public safety threats frequently identified as most threatening in department jurisdictions included the sale, trafficking, or use of illicit drugs (38 percent), domestic violence (22 percent), and burglaries or theft (15 percent). Eleven respondents reported firearm offenses (illegal production, sale, possession or use) as one of their jurisdiction's top three public safety threats.

The survey results indicated domestic violence was the most common violent crime in Central Illinois. The survey also showed guns and gangs were involved only in a small number of jurisdictions. In jurisdictions where gun crime and violent crime were a top public safety threat, law enforcement needs included community relations, public cooperation, and officer training.

Respondents in 29 urban or completely urban departments reported gang-related violent crime in their jurisdictions. Of those respondents, most reported the presence of gun violence as well. Three respondents reported especially high proportions of violent crime (25 percent or more) related to both shootings and gangs. Violent crime offenders (60 percent) and victims (49 percent) were reportedly most often between the ages of 20 to 29 and the relationship between them was most often reported as family or acquaintances (68 percent).

Most respondents reported typical law enforcement procedures (not specialized or dedicated response units) were used when responding to violent crime scenes (from 62 percent to 90 percent of respondents depending on the type of violence). This means fully specialized response units or the use of a few dedicated response personnel are mostly uncommon. Just over half of respondents reported a focused/targeted approach was utilized when implementing a strategy to reduce violent crime. However, hot spots (35 percent) and street stops (34 percent) approaches were used as well. Ninety-two percent of respondents reported that at least some personnel had received training on sexual assault. Training in street gangs (38 percent), focused deterrence (25 percent), and firearm/bullet tracing (17 percent) was less common or infrequent.

Departments typically conducted one or more initiatives to engage the community (95 percent) and at least “occasionally” reviewed community feedback (60 percent). Most communicated with the public about their crime fighting efforts in person (88 percent) and through social media (77 percent).

## **Conclusion**

This survey gathered knowledge about violent crime in the Central Illinois region to inform PSN activities. Drug, property, and domestic violence offenses were reported as common and widespread public safety threats in the region, while gun violence and gang violence were concentrated and followed established patterns.

Use of violence reduction strategies and tactics by departments varied, according to the survey results, but a basic capacity existed to implement violence reduction strategies. Technical support and assistance with training, community relations, data analysis, strategic planning, and assessment will be necessary for success.

More research on violent crime in Central Illinois and ongoing efforts to reduce it is warranted. Future work might address law enforcement knowledge about and openness regarding a problem-oriented policing approach, community perceptions about violent crime, operational difficulties departments face, critical missing training, and characteristics of specific types of gun and gang crime.

Finally, many aspects of a comprehensive approach were not covered in this survey. Though police and sheriff agencies may initially take the lead in planning and developing strategies, the goal should be to involve leaders from multiple sectors whose efforts overlap to address violent crime and serve the affected populations.

## Introduction

The consequences of violent crime are far-reaching, affecting not only victims and offenders for the rest of their lives, but also their families, friends, neighborhoods and cities (Giffords Law Center, 2017; Kelly, 2010; Langton & Truman, 2014). In 2017, there were 51,201 known incidents of violent crime in Illinois (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2017). The City of Chicago accounted for more than half of them, including 70 percent of all Illinois' homicides, 54 percent of aggravated assaults, 70 percent of robberies, and 39 percent of sexual assaults (FBI, 2017).

Locales outside of Chicago deal with the damaging effects of violent crime, as well. This can be seen when examining violent crime *rates* (i.e. the number of violent crimes in an area compared to the number of residents in that area). For example, while the 183 violent crimes that occurred in Centralia in 2017 are easily overshadowed by the 29,737 violent crimes that occurred in Chicago that year, Centralia has a population of just 12,496 residents (FBI, 2017). After adjusting for population size, violent crime directly affected a higher proportion of Centralia residents (15 per 1,000 residents) than Chicago residents (11 per 1,000 residents). While the number of homicides in Chicago was high—653 in 2017—homicide rates in East St. Louis (30 homicides), Sesser (2 homicides), and Danville (10 homicides) approached or exceeding Chicago's. Details like this are often lost in day to day media coverage of violent crime in Illinois, but the effects of violence still touch those in communities left out of the larger conversation.

Much of the burden for reducing violent crime is placed on local, state, and federal law enforcement. However, limited information about assault and homicide within Illinois' smaller municipalities is collected and reported in a systematic way. Because of this lack of information, law enforcement implementations of promising violence reduction approaches across the state are difficult to execute correctly and may turn out to be ineffective. The current study employed a survey of law enforcement to explore the characteristics of violent crime in Central Illinois, examining the region as a unique geographical area with its own set of violent crime problems. The aim was to supplement and fill in gaps in existing data on the characteristics of violent crime in the area and inform the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) program, a federal funding mechanism and framework for developing strategies to reduce gun and gang violence.

## **Literature Review**

### **Violent Crime in Chicago and Illinois**

Chicago's violent crime often overshadows violent crime occurring in smaller Illinois communities. In 2016, Chicago accounted for about 86 percent of the 799 gun homicides reported by police to the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2016). Research suggests that the 687 gun homicides in Chicago that year most often involved a firearm, occurred in a public place, were due to some type of altercation and disproportionately involved young Black men (University of Chicago Crime Lab, 2017). However, little is known about the 112 gun homicides and the 13,151 aggravated assaults that occurred outside of the city in 2016 (FBI, 2016). Those interested in examining these crimes must rely on broadly aggregated data from surveys (Morgan & Truman, 2018) and/or public health reporting (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003) to learn about the prevalence of nonfatal shootings, robbery, sexual assault, and the resulting victimization.

### **Foundations for Reducing Violent Crime**

Specific information about violent crime is missing from many smaller communities, making it difficult to develop evidence-informed reduction strategies in those places. Fortunately, promising violent crime reduction efforts are still developed based on the wealth of information from larger cities. Existing approaches to reduce violent crime can generally be divided into prevention, intervention, or suppression activities (Alderden, 2017). Each set of activities addresses unique but overlapping factors that can contribute to the occurrence of violent crime. These include situational factors, individual well-being and decision-making, social dynamics and norms, and the scope of available opportunities, among others (Reingle, Jennings, & Maldonado-Molina, 2012).

Addressing a single factor is undoubtedly easier task than tackling several of them. However, a violence reduction strategy that addresses multiple factors is more likely to yield a reduction in violence. A comprehensive approach to violence prevention is supported by decades of research (Piquero & Lawton, 2002) and the social-ecological model for violence prevention (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). This model contends that human development and behavior are products of individual characteristics, interpersonal relationships, community settings, and societal conditions collectively (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3). Law enforcement traditionally implements a suppression approach to violent crime, serving as an agent of formal social control through deterrence and legal sanctions. This targets individual decision-making, social norms, and opportunities for violent crime. Law enforcement alone cannot address all the factors contributing to violent crime though, thus a pairing of police activities with intervention and/or prevention activities is ideal in a violence reduction strategy.

A single intervention will not address all violent crime types. The nature of violent crime is too complex and local circumstances are often highly unique (Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Reichert et al., 2018). The lessons gained from past efforts teach that building targeted, effective violence reduction efforts that reflect individual communities requires theory, data, collaboration and flexibility. Additionally, attempts to apply any approach to reduce violent crime will fail if the following challenges are not addressed:

- A lack of actionable information about the unique characteristics of violence within individual communities (Reuter, 2017; Saunders et al., 2017).
- An absence of context-specific implementation guidance (McGarrell, Hipple, et al., 2018).
- Confusion about key components of promising program models (i.e. program fidelity) (Gleicher, 2017).

## **Project Safe Neighborhoods**

In this study, researchers gathered data to help inform and guide Project Safe Neighborhoods' (PSN) efforts in Central Illinois. Communities in Central Illinois could benefit from solutions that carefully integrate the broad knowledge base on reducing violent crime with local community circumstances, produce detailed program documentation and guidance, and precisely model existing program standards. PSN ultimately seeks to serve in this capacity as both a funding mechanism and a framework for locally developing strategies to reduce gun and gang violence.

The PSN framework emphasizes data analysis, problem-solving, cross-agency partnerships, and assessment (Ashcroft, 2001) and aims to integrate components from violence intervention models, such as Ceasefire and Cure Violence (i.e. Ceasefire-Chicago), though it does not necessarily limit its activities to one model or the other (McGarrell, Hipple, et al., 2018). Past implementations of the PSN approach have seen positive results in reducing violent crime (McGarrell, Perez, Carter, & Daffron, 2018; Papachristos et al., 2007). Federal funding for PSN programs is awarded to U.S. federal judicial districts based on funding needs, population, and violent crime rate. Funds must support the development of local, tailored initiatives to reduce gun and gang violence.

The U.S. Attorney's Office is responsible for bringing together stakeholders from law enforcement, government, and the public to build jurisdictional PSN task forces. The PSN task force is responsible for shaping the key components of PSN in its jurisdiction, which include core leadership and partnerships, targeted and prioritized law enforcement, prevention, and accountability (U.S. Department of Justice, 2018). PSN seeks to employ responsive problem-solving through the collection and analysis of data about violent crime, which ultimately guides PSN priorities and activities. Those activities are to result in a sustainable strategic action plan specific to the district, regular reporting about the program's development and activities, and an evaluation at the end of the project examining whether program implementation reduced the targeted violent crime in the targeted areas. As a national initiative, PSN currently attempts to systematize and then model the most beneficial elements from innovative efforts such as Boston Ceasefire and Cure Violence.

**Boston Ceasefire.** Initiated in the late 1990s, Ceasefire was a collaborative effort that incorporated police suppression with prevention and intervention tactics to reduce violent crime. The program's development started with collaborative problem analysis and planning and resulted in implementation involving law enforcement agencies, outreach workers, social service providers, and university researchers (McGarrell, Hipple, et al., 2018). A local analysis of the violent crime problem in Boston at the time revealed that most of the crime was related to concentrated youth group violence. Collaborators utilized this information, developed theories about potential intervention and suppression activities, and produced a violence reduction



strategy specific to the problem, called “pulling levers.” Also known as focused deterrence, pulling levers uses an analysis of crime data to narrow the attention of police, prosecutors, social services, and community voices toward the individuals and/or street groups most frequently committing violent crimes. Individuals and any accomplices are persuaded to discontinue violent behavior via public moral appeals, offers of assistance in addressing issues with poverty and health (through social services), and threats of swift, certain, and severe consequences for not desisting (Reichert et al., 2018).

Research suggests the focused deterrence approach produced a notable and immediate reduction in violent crime in Boston and results from subsequent implementations have since indicated that Boston’s focused deterrence model is a promising platform for violence reduction and future study (Braga & Weisburd, 2012). Among many elements, Ceasefire’s success hinged on its extensive partnerships, which enabled systematic planning and a complementary pairing of intervention activities with suppression activities.

**Chicago Ceasefire.** Ceasefire in Chicago (now known as Cure Violence) is notably different from the Boston Model but similarly includes local problem analysis, partnerships, theory-based modeling and a mixture of violence reduction activities. The Chicago-based initiative was developed with the intention to change norms about violence and detect and interrupt conflicts in neighborhoods before they become deadly. In Cure Violence, Outreach workers (also known as violence interrupters) utilize information from people in the community closest to ongoing conflicts and violence to proactively seek out those involved and de-escalate situations (McGarrell, Hipple, et al., 2018). Designed to work in parallel with the efforts of more traditional law enforcement strategies, the violence interruption approach heavily utilizes police information and assistance in many cases, but does not rely on policing activities. Instead, the model is geared toward intervention and prevention activities, seeking to dissuade individual violent behavior through specific changes in beliefs, values, and norms and assistance with opportunities and personal well-being.

Ceasefire/Cure Violence evaluations suggested its activities were successful in reducing shootings in sampled sites (Papachristos et al., 2007; Skogan et al., 2009). Subsequent implementations at other sites suggest Cure Violence’s model is a promising one for violence reduction (Webster, Whitehill, Vernick, & Curriero, 2013), but also that its success is critically dependent on program fidelity (McGarrell, Hipple, et al., 2018, p. 4). Recent research also suggests the ability to sustain the initial violence reduction effects of the program remains questionable, a common issue with violence reduction initiatives (Grunwald & Papachristos, 2017).

## **Current Study**

In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2002, funding for a Project Safe Neighborhoods task force was awarded to Illinois' Northern, Central, and Southern federal judicial districts for one year. Since then, PSN funding has been awarded to the districts annually, administered by ICJIA and Hoyleton Youth and Family Services. The participation of counties and municipalities and the activities undertaken each year under PSN have varied depending on the level of funding received and the areas chosen as a focus for PSN activities. For FFY18, the federal judicial district of Central Illinois is one of three Illinois districts awarded PSN funding (total award of \$138,479), but PSN's areas of focus and activities are to be determined.

In FFY18, ICJIA researchers partnered with the PSN in Illinois' Central district to assist in decision-making and evaluation. ICJIA administered a survey to police and sheriff departments within the Central district to supplement knowledge about guns, gangs, and violent crime in the area, understand past and current law enforcement responses to violent crime, inform PSN activities, and guide ICJIA research and funding.

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the current public safety priorities of law enforcement in the area?
2. What are the characteristics of violent crime in the area?
3. How are guns and gangs involved in violent crime?
4. What has law enforcement done in the past to address violent crime and what are they doing now?
5. What is the extent of law enforcement experience with implementing strategies to reduce violent crime and what capacity is there for future implementations?

## **Methodology**

Researchers conducted purposeful sampling of 285 police and 46 sheriff departments serving any jurisdiction located in one of 46 Central Illinois counties. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of Illinois provided an email list of those agencies to researchers. The contact list used for sending out survey invitations included names and email addresses for each department's chief, sheriff, or liaison and sometimes included only a generic contact email address. In October 2018, the agencies were invited by email to respond to an online survey about violent crime, which noted the support of the PSN task force, the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, Illinois Sheriff's Association, and Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police. The survey was open for approximately six weeks from October 2018 to December 2018. Reminder emails were sent out weekly and reminder phone calls were made during the final week of the survey period to bolster responses.

Upon entering the survey, respondents were shown a consent form explaining the purpose of the survey, the process to complete it, the confidentiality of their individual responses, and the use of subsequent aggregated data. The project and its materials were approved by the ICJIA's internal Institutional Review Board as ethical human subject research. The survey was conducted online with Qualtrics survey software. Data was downloaded via Qualtrics' web interface and descriptive and bivariate analyses were conducted in SPSS, a statistical software.

Researchers developed the 37 survey questions with the assistance of PSN task force members, who reviewed questions and suggested additional topics to explore. Nine questions were adapted

from the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) survey (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013) and one question was adapted from the Community Survey on Public Safety and Law Enforcement survey (Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014). Question skip patterns and survey display logic were incorporated for some of the questions on the survey. Depending on a respondent's answers to the survey, not every question was presented to every respondent. To reduce bias, response choices to questions requiring ranking were randomized. The survey typically took approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete in one session, though individuals could save progress on their survey and return to it at any point if time was needed to gather information about the questions asked.

### **Study Limitations**

Several areas of Central Illinois are represented in the survey results and the information gained is useful as initial guidance in future areas to explore. However, the survey response rate, skipped questions, and non-random sampling may affect the generalizability of this survey. Thus, conclusions may not necessarily be applicable to every jurisdiction in the Central region of Illinois.

The decision to list certain types of public safety threats to be ranked by priority limited respondents' choices to those of interest to the researchers and the Project Safe Neighborhood team. It is possible a department's top public safety threat was not listed (e.g., mental health crises). Additionally, personnel within a department may disagree with the response provided on these types of questions.

Respondents were asked to provide proportions of different types of violent crime occurring in their jurisdictions based on the best information available to them at the time. The design of the survey encouraged participants to do this by offering the option to complete the survey in multiple sessions. Still, answers about the proportion of violent crime in a particular jurisdiction may reflect approximate estimates.

The survey included questions that required recall of distant past, more recent past, and present circumstances (e.g. since January of 2017). As with most surveys, respondents' ability to recall past events could have affected survey outcomes.

Though brief definitions were provided, respondents may have different understandings of what official and non-official plans to implement violence reduction strategies meant. Similarly, perceptions about what differentiates a full specialized unit for responding to violent crime, a few dedicated personnel, or standardized enforcement may vary depending on respondents' experiences and perspectives.

### **Sample Description**

A total of 68 of 331 targeted respondents completed the survey (a 20.5 percent response/completion rate). Most respondents functioned as the head of a municipal police department (*Table 1*). Departments typically employed between 1 and 50 sworn officers (84 percent) and were located in both urban and rural areas, though mostly or completely urban areas were most common (61 percent).

**Table 1**  
**Respondent and Department Characteristics**

<b>Department Geography* (n=65)</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Completely urban	10	15%
Mostly urban	30	46%
Mostly rural	21	32%
Completely rural	4	6%
<b>Sworn Officers** (n=67)</b>		
0 (non-sworn only)	0	0%
1-50	56	84%
51-100	7	10%
101-150	2	3%
151-200	0	0%
More than 200	2	3%
<b>Department Type (n=68)</b>		
Municipal Police	57	84%
County Sheriff	3	4%
Univ. or Park Police	8	1%
<b>Respondent Title/Role (n=67)</b>		
Chief Executive Officer***	51	75%
Manager/Supervisor	13	19%
Officer/Analyst	3	4%
Unknown	1	2%

Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

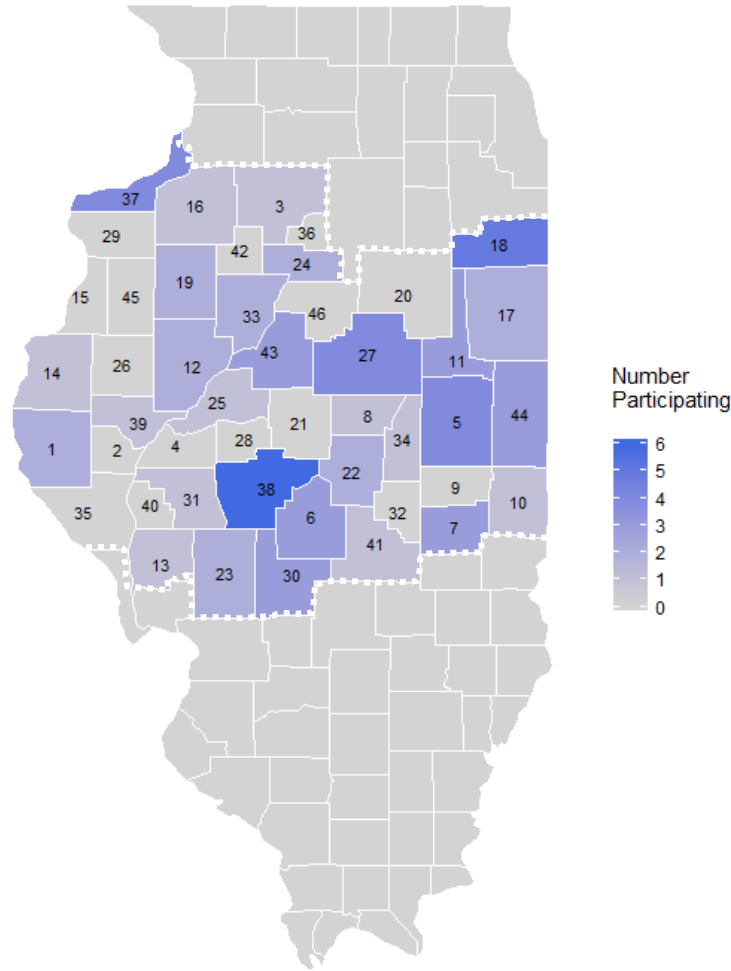
\*Urban and rural distinctions were self-reported.

\*\*Both part-time and full-time.

\*\*\*“Chief Executive Officer” denotes Chiefs, Sheriffs, Directors of Public Safety, and other titles that perform functions as the head of a department.

The 68 survey respondents were located across 30 of 46 total counties in Central Illinois (Figure 1). At least one law enforcement department from each of the 10 Central Illinois counties that accounted for approximately 82 percent of aggravated assault and battery occurrences in 2017 (Illinois State Police, 2018) responded to the survey. Those counties were Adams, Champaign, Kankakee, Macon, McLean, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, Tazewell, and Vermillion.

**Figure 1**  
**Number of Departments Participating in the Survey, by County (n=68)**



**County Names**

1 Adams*	9 Douglas	17 Iroquois	25 Mason	33 Peoria*	41 Shelby
2 Brown	10 Edgar	18 Kankakee*	26 McDonough	34 Piatt	42 Stark
3 Bureau	11 Ford	19 Knox	27 Mclean*	35 Pike	43 Tazewell*
4 Cass	12 Fulton	20 Livingston	28 Menard	36 Putnam	44 Vermilion*
5 Champaign*	13 Greene	21 Logan	29 Mercer	37 Rock Island*	45 Warren
6 Christian	14 Hancock	22 Macon*	30 Montgomery	38 Sangamon*	46 Woodford
7 Coles	15 Henderson	23 Macoupin	31 Morgan	39 Schuyler	
8 De Witt	16 Henry	24 Marshall	32 Moultrie	40 Scott	

Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments

\*1 of 10 counties accounting for 82% of aggravated assaults and batteries in the region in 2017, according to preliminary Illinois State Police data.

## Survey Results

The survey of law enforcement in Central Illinois focused on characteristics of local public safety threats, prevalence of violent crime and law enforcement responses, and the existence of basic elements that could help implement violence reduction strategies. The following summarizes the survey findings.

### Public Safety Threats

Survey participants (N=68) ranked their jurisdiction’s greatest public safety threats from a list of 19 choices. Specifically, they were asked to rank the top three threats in order by placing items separately into one of three boxes labeled as 1<sup>st</sup> most threatening, 2<sup>nd</sup> most threatening, and 3<sup>rd</sup> most threatening. The choices most frequently rated as most threatening included illicit drugs (sale, trafficking, use) (38 percent), domestic violence (22 percent), and burglaries or theft (15 percent).

**Violent crime.** Fifty-eight respondents indicated that a crime related to violence was one of the top three threats in their jurisdiction. Among these respondents, domestic violence was included 76 percent of the time, followed by sexual assault/rape (21 percent), firearm offenses (illegal production, sale, possession or use) (19 percent), homicide (7 percent), physical assault (5 percent), child abuse (5 percent) and robbery (3 percent).

**Firearm offenses.** Sixteen percent of all respondents (11) selected firearm offenses (illegal production, sale, possession or use) as one of their jurisdiction’s top three public safety threats. All 11 jurisdictions were self-described as mostly urban or completely urban, with department sizes ranging anywhere from 1-50 sworn personnel to over 200. All but one of the departments selecting firearm offenses as a top priority (n=10) were located within the 10 counties that made up 82% of aggravated assaults and batteries in Central Illinois during 2017 (ISP, 2018).

### Critical Department Needs

Respondents ranked seven items potentially critical to resolving the public safety threats they indicated earlier by dragging and dropping a list of choices into the corresponding ordered. The seven items included training, community relations, law enforcement and social service collaborations, recruitment, and data analysis. Across all respondents, “training/education” was most commonly ranked as the most critical (number one) need, followed by “community relations” and “public support/cooperation,” (Table 2). Data collection/analysis was most frequently ranked as 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Table 2**  
**Potential Needs Ranked as the Most Critical by Survey Respondents (n=65)**

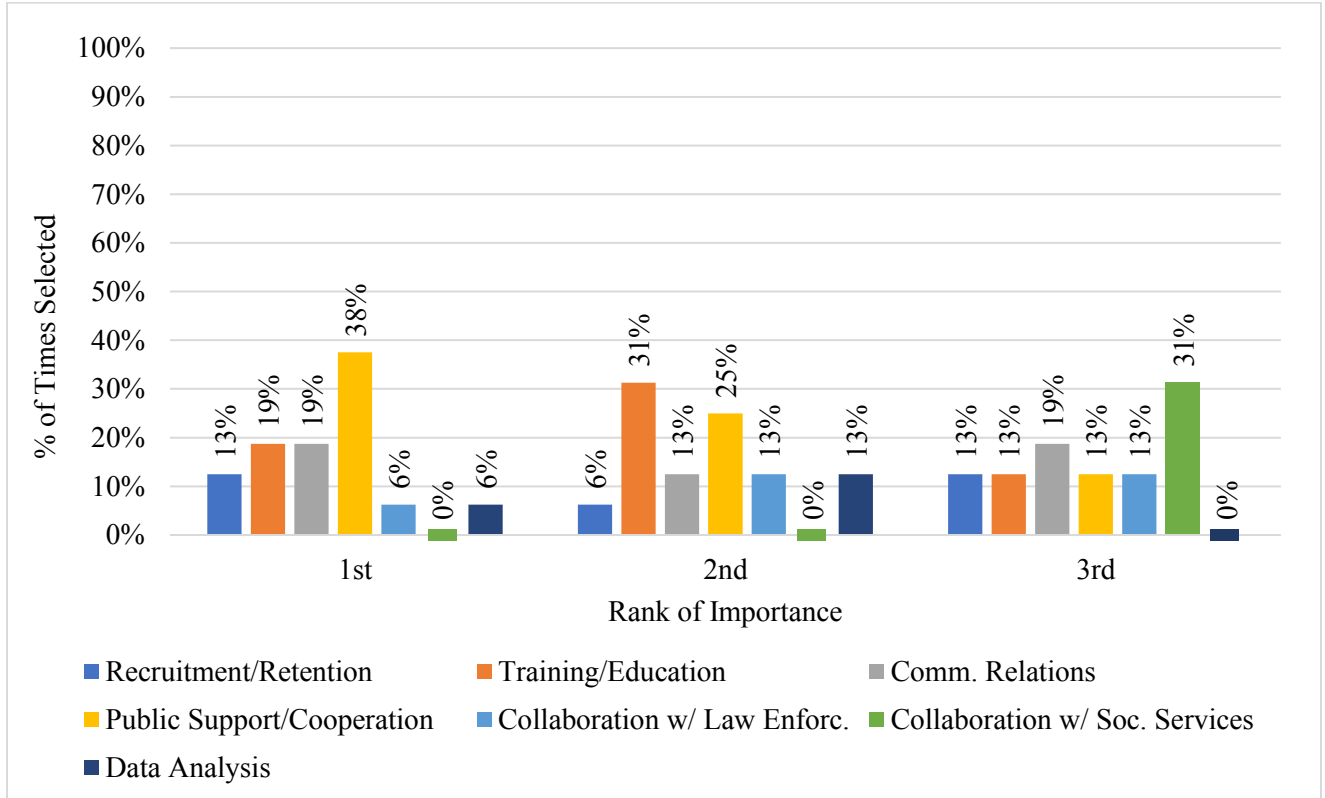
<b>Potential needs ranked as the most critical</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Training/education	32%
Community relations	23%
Public support/cooperation	19%
Collaborations with other law enforcement agencies	12%
Recruitment/retention	6%
Data collection/analysis	6%

Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments

Many respondents did not identify a crime related to violence as a top public safety threat, or identified only one type of crime related to violence as a top safety threat (n=52). Considering that these respondents may view their departments’ needs differently than those who ranked at least two crimes related to violence as a top public safety threat (n=16), researchers analyzed responses about critical department needs separately for the group of respondents identifying two or more crimes related to violence as a top public safety threat.

In this subgroup of 16 respondents, “public support/cooperation” was ranked as the most critical need 38 percent of the time. When looking at second and third rankings, “Training/education” was most often ranked second most important (31 percent) and “collaboration with social services” was most often ranked third most important (31 percent). *Figure 2* breaks down all needs ranked first, second, or third for respondents who selected two or more types of crime related to violence as top threats. “Data collection/analysis” was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in importance among 44 percent of these respondents.

**Figure 2**  
**Top 3 Needs Reported by Departments Where More than One Crime Related to Violence Was Prioritized as a Threat (n=16)**



Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments

## Violent Crime Characteristics

Violence occurs in varying locations, for a variety of reasons, and via the use of multiple types of weapons. However, PSN expressly focuses on crime that occurs with a firearm as a weapon and/or crime that occurs in the context of gang activity. Respondents were asked to indicate what proportion of violent crime was carried out with a firearm as a projectile weapon (i.e. not as a blunt instrument) and what proportion of violent crime occurred in the gang context. For comparison, they were also asked to indicate how often violent crime is related to drug activity or domestic conflicts.

Overall, survey respondents indicated violent crime involving guns and/or gangs made up a smaller portion of violent crime than that related to drugs or domestic situations (*Table 3*). Thirty-one respondents (47 percent) indicated that *none* of the violent crime in their jurisdiction was related to shootings. In 25 jurisdictions shootings made up at least 1 percent of violent crime. Up to a quarter of respondents reported that information regarding the proportion of violent crime in each category was not available at the time they answered the survey.

**Table 3**  
**Proportion of Violence Accounted for Within Department Jurisdictions**

Shootings (n=66)		Gang-Related Violence (n=66)		Drug-Related Violence (n=66)		Domestic Violence (n=66)	
% of violent crime	n	% of violent crime	n	% of violent crime	n	% of violent crime	n
0%	31	0%	26	0%	3	0%	0
1-24%	22	1-24%	23	1-24%	17	1-24%	15
25-49%	2	25-49%	2	25-49%	10	25-49%	17
50-74%	0	50-74%	3	50-74%	15	50-74%	15
75-100%	1	75-100%	1	75-100%	5	75-100%	4
Unavailable / not tracked	10	Unavailable / not tracked	11	Unavailable / not tracked	16	Unavailable / not tracked	15

Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments

**Gang-related violence.** Most of the departments with gang-related violent crime (n=29) reported the occurrence of shooting violence as well (76 percent). Six respondents indicated that gang violence makes up 25 percent of violent crime or more in their jurisdiction. These jurisdictions were all described by respondents as mostly or completely urban. Further breakdowns revealed that 3 of these 6 respondents indicated shootings also make up 25 percent of their jurisdiction’s violent crime. Of the 29 respondents in jurisdictions where violent crime was related to gangs, 21 reported that the gangs in their area were “somewhat,” “very” or “extremely disorganized.”

**Violent crime trends.** Survey responses suggested violence related to drugs, domestic violence, and shootings had not changed in prevalence over the past five years. Violence related to mental health crises was frequently reported to have increased over the last five years (*Table 4*).



**Table 4**  
**Respondent-Reported Violent Crime Trends Over Five Years, by Type**

<b>Violence related to...</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Decreased</b>	<b>Stayed the Same</b>	<b>Increased</b>
Drugs	65	8%	62%	31%
Domestic Violence	66	2%	82%	17%
Firearms	61	34%	53%	13%
Gangs	62	43%	51%	7%
Mental Health Crises	66	5%	27%	68%

Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff's departments

**Characteristics of Violent Offenders and Victims of Violent Crime**

Respondents indicated most violent offenders in their jurisdictions were 20 to 29 years old (60 percent). The age range for most victims of violence was similar, with 20- to 29-year-old victims making up the largest portion (49 percent). The relationships between offenders and victims was reported to frequently be family (39 percent) (*Table 5*).

**Table 5**  
**Ages and Relationships of Offenders and Victims in Respondent Jurisdictions**

<b>Offender Ages</b> <b>(n=65)</b>	<b>%</b>
Under 20	14%
20 – 29	60%
30 – 39	25%
40 – 49	2%
50 or older	0%
<b>Victim Ages (n=57)</b>	<b>%</b>
Under 20	12%
20 – 29	49%
30 – 39	32%
40 – 49	5%
50 or older	2%
<b>Victim/Offender</b> <b>Relationship (n=65)</b>	<b>%</b>
Family	39%
Acquaintances	29%
Unknown/not tracked	22%
Friends	5%
Strangers	3%
Something else	3%

Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments

### Violent Crime Reduction Activities, Responses, and Capacities

Respondents were surveyed about their community engagement efforts as well as their responses to different types of violent crime, including whether they dispatched a specialized response team or specially trained personnel to the scene, whether they partnered with anyone to reduce violent crime, and whether they had implemented specific violence reduction strategies in the past.

**Special Units.** Most respondents indicated that their agency does not typically utilize specialized units when responding to calls where violence has occurred (e.g. domestic violence), is occurring (e.g. an active shooter) or where it has the potential to occur (e.g. a mental health crisis). A basic enforcement response was reported to be the most common approach, particularly in scenarios involving gang-related violence and gun violence. In situations involving sexual assault, mental health crises, and active shooters, a few dedicated personnel or a specialized responding unit are sometimes available (*Table 6*).

**Table 6**  
**Department Responses to Different Types of Calls for Service/**

Type of Call	n	Department Response		
		A fully specialized response unit	A few dedicated personnel for response (not a <u>full</u> unit)	Basic enforcement response (standard policies, procedures, or training)
<b>Gang-related violence</b>	64	6%	6%	88%
<b>Gun violence</b>	64	2%	9%	90%
<b>Active shooters</b>	64	2%	22%	77%
<b>Sexual assault</b>	63	3%	35%	62%
<b>Domestic violence</b>	64	0%	14%	86%
<b>Mental health crisis</b>	64	2%	25%	73%

Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments

**Strategies for Reducing Violence.** Respondents were asked to share information about violence reduction strategies their departments had implemented since January 2017 and presented with a specific list of strategies from which to choose, including:

- ***A focused or targeted approach***, which generally refers to a law enforcement focus on a small set of people committing the most crime or a specific crime of interest. Some focused approaches (like focused deterrence initiatives) include social service and community voice elements.
- ***Hot spots policing***, which is a place-based focus on frequent crime locations. How crime should be addressed in the hot spots identified is mostly a separate matter.
- ***Street stops***, which are practices that include “stop-and-frisk” or “stop, question, and frisk.”
- ***Crackdowns***, which include short, intense raids of certain locations either for all offenses in an area or a specific chosen offense.

- **Disorder policing/broken windows** (also known as zero-tolerance policing), which is an approach similar to crackdowns in that it produces more arrests for offenses in an area, except in a more sustained (long-term) and potentially broad manner than crackdowns.
- **Enhanced offender prosecution**, which entails working with prosecutors and judges to increase the severity of sanctions for offenders of certain crimes.
- **Gun buy back campaigns**, which publicize a call for people to turn in weapons for which they will receive some sort compensation with no questions asked.

A focused or targeted approach was the most common strategy used by those surveyed (51 percent), followed by hot spots policing (35 percent) and street stops (34 percent). Other strategies employed included crackdowns (14 percent), disorder policing/broken windows (14 percent), and enhanced offender prosecution (11 percent). Respondents indicated that gun buy back campaigns were not employed. Additionally, nearly 30 percent reported using none of these strategies.

Six of the 11 departments that ranked firearm offenses (illegal production, sale, possession or use) among the top safety threats employed focused/targeted enforcement, five employed hot spots policing and five employed street stops. Two of the 11 departments had used none of the strategies listed.

An exploration of 51 open-text responses about what respondents perceived as the most effective violence reduction strategies revealed police presence and/or saturation approaches were mentioned (n=16), followed by community, problem-oriented, or intelligence-led policing (n=10), and focused/targeted enforcement (n=9).<sup>1</sup> Due to the open-ended nature of the question, an assortment of other tactics, strategies, and activities also were mentioned, including specialized units, social media, drug enforcement, specific agency partnerships, officer training, investigations, prosecutions, and sentencing.

Most respondents did not have, or know of, any official (as in written or publicly announced) plans to start, continue, or end the above violence reduction strategies.<sup>2</sup> When respondents did report official plans about the listed strategies, they typically indicated the intention was to continue or expand the strategy (82 percent of the time on average). However, several departments were planning to begin disorder policing/broken windows, focused/targeted enforcement, hot spots policing, or crackdowns (*Appendix A*). When asked if there were strategies not listed that departments had used before or were planning to use, survey respondents mentioned problem-oriented policing (n=1), tactics related to community policing (n=4), and patrol presence (n=1). At least one respondent explained that they were *informally* planning to implement several of the strategies listed in the previous questions, meaning plans existed but were not necessarily written or publicly announced.

**Partners to reduce violent crime.** Of 63 respondents, 59 percent reported having no official, public, or written partnership with any outside organization to reduce violent crime. Of those who said they did (n=26), the most common partner was another law enforcement agency (88 percent), followed by a non-profit organization (35 percent), non-law enforcement

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<sup>1</sup> If more than one strategy was mentioned in one response each strategy was individually counted.

<sup>2</sup> Departments could have been engaging in informal planning while having no official plan. Also, a department could have started and ended a strategy before 2017.

government agency (31 percent), college or university researcher (15 percent), community group (15 percent), school (8 percent), or other partner (4 percent).

**Engagement with the community.** Respondents indicated their departments communicated with the public about crimefighting efforts in many ways, most commonly through social media, television, radio, newspaper, and public or in-person meetings (*Table 7*).

**Table 7**  
**Reported Frequency of Public Communications, by Mode**

Communication mode	n	Never	Less often than once a month	Once a month	More often than once a month
Official agency website	60	42%	37%	13%	8%
Social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)	62	23%	16%	21%	40%
Television, radio, or newspaper	60	38%	27%	13%	22%
Mailed letters or phone calls	61	77%	18%	0%	5%
Email/Newsletter	60	62%	27%	5%	7%
Public Meeting/In-person	60	12%	38%	30%	20%
Public signage (e. g bus stops, billboards, posters etc.)	60	78%	20%	2%	0%

Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments

Of 64 respondents most indicated that their department implemented at least one initiative meant to improve its relationship with members of the public since January of 2017 (95 percent), and nearly a third implemented seven or more (30 percent). More than half of the departments said they reviewed feedback that the public provides about their work occasionally, frequently, or very frequently (60 percent).

**Records management and technology.** To assess the ability of a department’s capacity for data collection, analysis, and dissemination of information supporting problem-oriented and intelligence-driven strategies to reduce violent crime, respondents were asked about record-keeping and storage practices. Out of 65 respondents, almost all reported that their departments currently maintained a “computerized records system” for criminal incidents (n=61). At least 90 percent of these departments recorded an incident’s narrative description, data and time, street address, standard offense code, legal code, and victim and suspect information. Fewer departments included visual or audio media related to the event (57 percent) or a geocoded address of the offense (30 percent).

Respondents who reported maintaining computerized crime incident records (n=61) were then asked to indicate who, if anyone, had analyzed those computerized records since January 2017. “None of the above” was chosen 43 percent of the time from the list of possibilities provided

while no response was selected by 21 percent of the respondents. When analyses were conducted they appeared to be done mostly by law enforcement (31 percent) (*Table 8*).

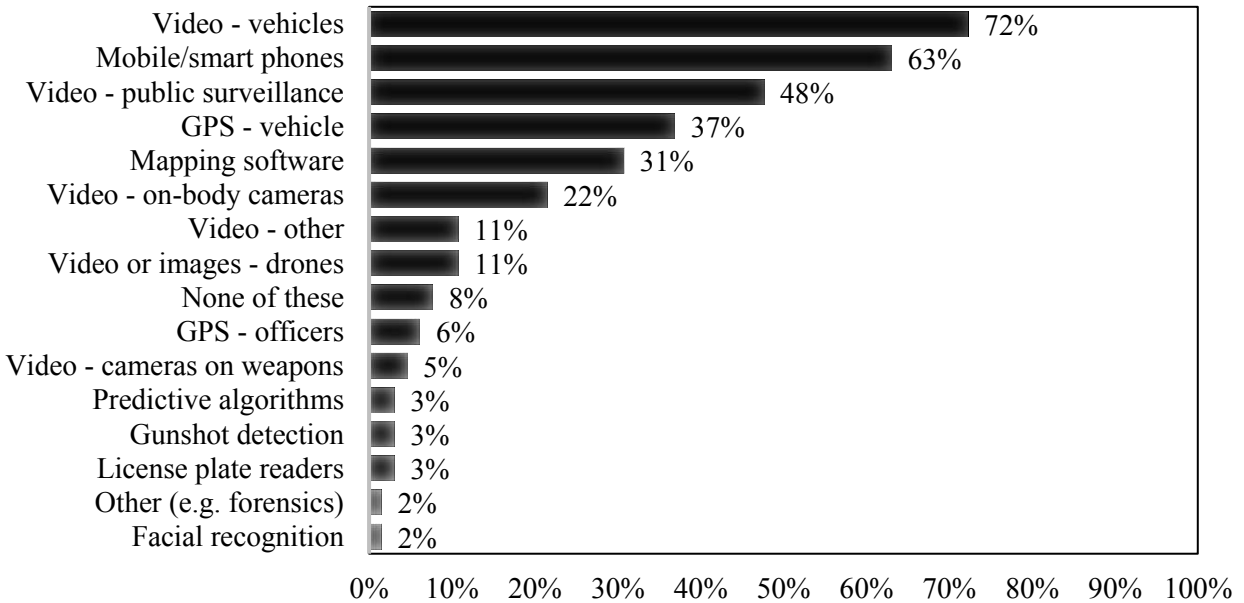
**Table 8**  
**Frequency of Conducting Data Analyses on Computerized Crime Data, by Type of Organization (n=61)**

<b>Analyses conducted by...</b>	<b>%</b>
Law enforcement (e.g. internal staff)	31%
Government (non-law enforcement)	10%
Non-profit	5%
College/university researcher	3%
Other (e.g. media, public, etc.)	2%
Commercial vendor	2%
None of the above	43%
[No choices marked]	21%

Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments

Respondents were also given a list of 15 law enforcement technologies and asked to select those in use at their departments. Some technologies listed, such as gunshot detection, geographic information systems, and predictive algorithms, could help reduce violent crime and perform data collection and analyses when implemented effectively. Most respondents utilized patrol vehicle video systems, mobile/smart phones, and some type of public surveillance (*Figure 3*).

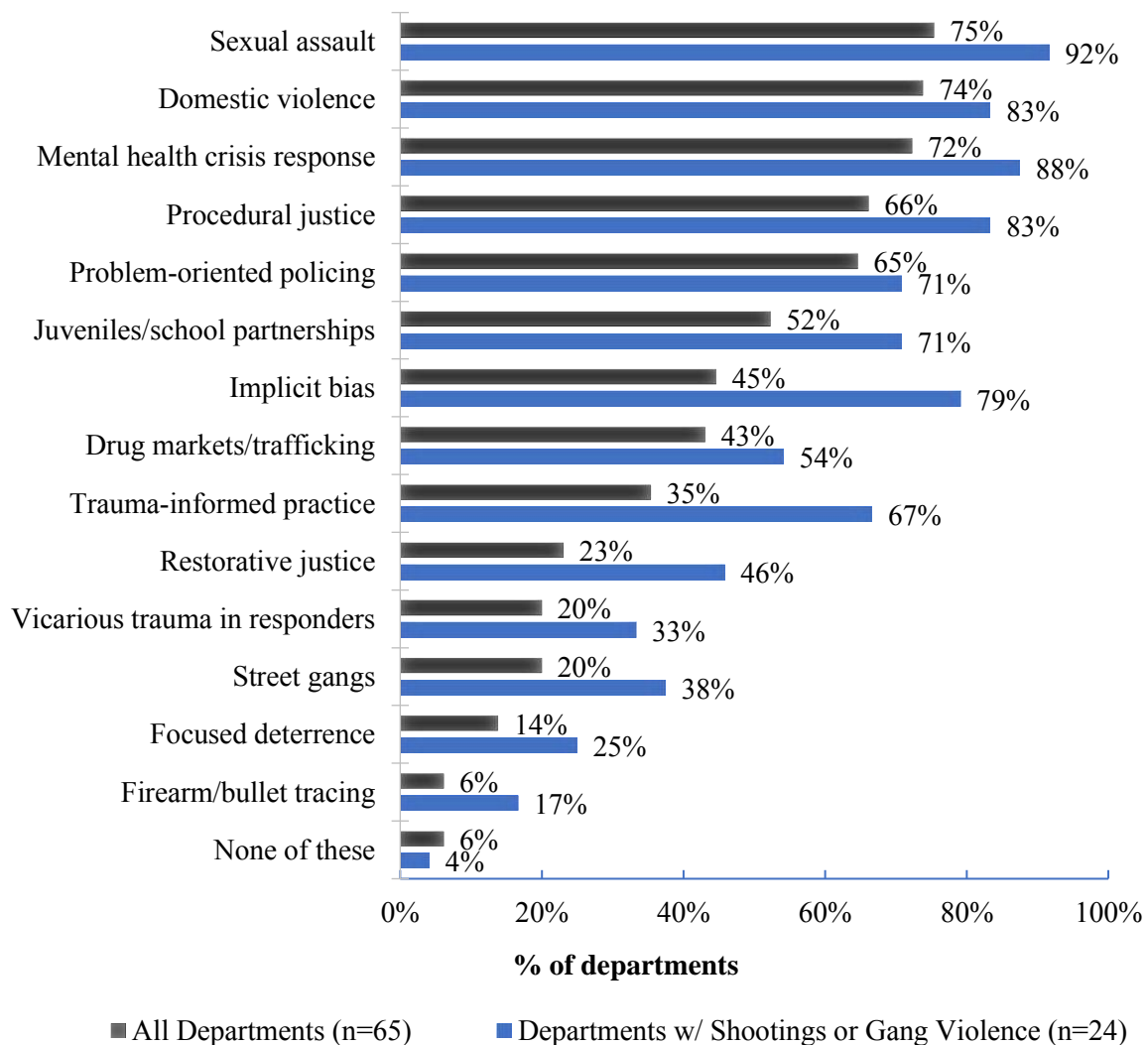
**Figure 3**  
**Types of Technology Employed by Surveyed Departments (n=65)**



Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments

**Training.** Respondents (n=65) indicated the most common specialized training received by department personnel within the past two years was related to sexual assault (75 percent), followed by domestic violence (74 percent), mental health crisis response (72 percent), procedural justice (66 percent), and problem-oriented policing (65 percent) (*Figure 4*). A few survey respondents indicated that they knew of no staff who had received training on the 14 topics provided. Training was reported to be more common in all categories in jurisdictions where shootings and/or gang activity existed (n=24).

**Figure 4**  
**Types of Specialized Training Received in Jurisdictions with Shootings or Gang Violence, as Reported by Respondents**



Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments

## Discussion

PSN can help law enforcement launch violence reduction strategies tailored to local communities with proper problem analysis and strategy development. To be effective and responsive to local circumstances, strategies should utilize local data about violent crime to develop a theory of change and shape operations spanning prevention, intervention, and/or suppression activities. The violent crime survey was primarily conducted to supplement knowledge about guns, gangs, and violent crime in the central region of Illinois and examine past and current law enforcement responses to violent crime to inform PSN activities. Survey results suggest the PSN task force should consider the following points moving forward.

### Public Safety Threats

Domestic violence, drug offenses, and property offenses were most frequently selected as the top public safety threats. These findings were consistent with 2016 Illinois Uniform Crime Report (I-UCR) arrest data for Central Illinois, which showed drug and property offenses made up 89 percent of all arrests that year (Illinois State Police, 2016). UCR data does not break out individual arrests for domestic violence, but aggravated assault arrests made up about 10 percent of all Central Illinois arrests in 2016 (Illinois State Police, 2016). The number of more broadly defined *domestic offenses* reported statewide to Illinois police by local departments in 2016 was 118,160, with homicide, battery, aggravated battery, aggravated assault, assault, and sexual assault/abuse making up 70 percent of those offenses (Illinois State Police, 2016).

Overall, trends suggest that arrests for violent crime have steadily declined in the region since the mid-1990s (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 2019). Thus, even jurisdictions perceiving violent crime as a priority must frequently deal with other types of crime. Although problem-oriented, collaborative, and focused initiatives similar to those employed by PSN have been implemented to deal with drug markets (e.g. Chapman et al., 2015) and domestic violence (e.g. Sechrist & Weil, 2018), results were mixed and may be irrelevant to PSN efforts without a clear connection to gun and gang violence.

### Patterns and Concentration of Violence

Survey responses indicated Central Illinois law enforcement agencies are not handling large proportions of crime related to gun and gang violence, which means PSN activities would be directly relevant only to a small portion of jurisdictions.

The PSN focus would be best utilized in jurisdictions where survey results and available crime data suggest violent crime is especially related to shootings or gangs. This could encompass department jurisdictions where firearm offenses are among the top three threats, jurisdictions where gangs are involved in at least 25 percent of violent crime, or jurisdictions where both shootings and gangs are reportedly involved in at least 25 percent of violent crime.

Gang-related violence and shootings were often present together in urban jurisdictions, suggesting these categories of violence may share contributing factors in densely populated locations. Local data collection and analyses should be conducted to confirm this finding. Most respondents perceived gangs in their jurisdictions to be disorganized (i.e. without clear leadership or hierarchies), something to consider when crafting an approach to gang violence. This finding is supported by the work of scholars examining gangs and violence in areas like Chicago, where research points to the existence of similar gang characteristics and therefore

suggests that important revisions to efforts targeting gang violence are necessary in order to make an impact (Hagedorn, Aspholm, Cordova, Papachristos, & Williams, 2019).

The focused deterrence approach utilizes call-ins to convey a deterrence messages that is supposed to trickle down from offenders to friends and acquaintances, particularly those who may be gang-affiliated or directly involved in crime (Reichert et al., 2018). When hierarchies are unclear or informal, a deterrence message that targets gang violence specifically may not be effective. Certainly, the deterrence message will not spread through a gang's members efficiently via one affiliated member. The deterrence message, and perhaps messages about social services and the community's moral voice, will need to be more frequent, sustained, or public than in circumstances where gangs are more organized. Depending on the characteristics of more loosely associated criminally-involved groups in the area, gangs may not be suitable targets of focus.

According to the survey respondents in Central Illinois, most of the offenders and victims of violence were reported to be 20 to 29 years old, which is consistent with reports about the age of gun offenders in Chicago (University of Chicago Crime Lab, 2017). Survey responses also indicated that offenders and victims of violence were most often known to each other either as family or acquaintances or that their relationship was unknown. This is generally in line with national FBI data which indicates that in homicide cases occurring in 2017, acquaintance and family relationships were most common (20 percent and 12 percent, respectively), though in about half of known homicides relationship information was reported as unknown (FBI, 2017). More complete victim-offender relationship information at the local level can be helpful in understanding the context and dynamics of homicide and violent crime (Decker, 1993).

Known factors that contribute to the young adult population's participation in violent crime, including but not limited to gang membership (Huebner, Varano, & Bynum, 2007; Pyrooz, Turanovic, Decker, & Wu, 2016), should be outlined by a research partner and data on these factors should be collected and analyzed by the PSN task force and its local community partners. Future research also could explore factors that are unique to an area. This will enable the development of a localized plan to directly identify and engage with those who are at high risk for violent offending and victimization through both available social services and law enforcement action (Beardslee et al., 2018; Spano, 2012).

### **Violence Reduction Strategies**

Most respondents indicated that their department's response to violent crime situations encompasses a standard law enforcement response. Units or personnel specifically trained to deal with a certain type of violent situation were uncommon, except for a small portion of agencies who handled active shooters, sexual assaults, and mental health crises with specialized personnel. Research on specialized police units or personnel is limited and unclear on whether they are effective (Namgung, 2013). In some contexts (e.g. responding to mental health crises), studies find that implementing specialized units or a few specially trained personnel produces a few positive but inconsistent results (Gatens, 2018) and in other contexts (e.g. domestic violence) the impact of specialized units or personnel has been tentatively positive (Sechrist & Weil, 2018), mixed (Farrell & Buckley, 1999) or negligible and highly sensitive to implementation problems (e.g. special gang units) (Braga, 2015). A research partner's examination of specialized units and personnel for violent crime response in the few Central Illinois departments that employ them could produce useful guidance on when they are appropriate, whether they are



effective in the region, and how they might be developed in other departments. Inquiries about the existence of special department policies and procedures for violent crime responses should be made in initial planning meetings with leaders in police and sheriff departments.

Violence reduction strategies falling under focused/targeted, hot spots, and street stop approaches topped the list of frequent initiatives agencies have employed in the past. Within each type of approach there is considerable room for variation in practice, though, including activities that mix more than one strategy. This can be beneficial for producing tailored solutions, but without some level of guidance it also could negatively impact proper implementation and outcome effectiveness (Gleicher, 2017). Guidance on specific interventions and broader proactive policing approaches with the potential to address gun and gang violence can be found in great detail elsewhere in the form of articles, books, interactive visuals, websites, and even web applications (Alderden, 2017; Lum, Koper, & Telep, 2011; Melde, 2013; National Academies of Sciences, 2017; National Institute of Justice, 2019; Police Foundation, 2019).

**Implementation Capacity.** Training/education was selected by respondents as one of the most serious needs across all departments. Survey results showed that many departments facing gang and gun violence had staff who received domestic violence and sexual assault training but few had staff who received specialized training on street gangs, focused deterrence, and firearm/bullet tracing, indicating potential areas in which training can be expanded. Additionally, police department staff may benefit from basic trainings on the general array of available violence reduction solutions, how they work, and how to effectively implement them in their communities.

Training and education could start with current information on problem-oriented policing and evidence-informed strategies for reducing violent crime (e.g. National Academies of Sciences, 2017) and progress toward more complex training on other components, such as the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network, offender notifications, geographic information systems, evidence and intelligence gathering, youth and school partnerships, community trauma, and procedural justice. An introductory briefing on PSN's key aspects, such as evidence-informed strategies for violence reduction, collaborative framework, leadership roles, and timeline, could cultivate a shared understanding of the program and make it easier to collaborate.

Public support and cooperation were perceived as especially critical by departments where multiple crimes related to violence were selected as top threats. Survey respondents indicated their departments reviewed public feedback at least occasionally and conducted several initiatives throughout the year to improve their department's relationship with the community, but it remains unclear whether these activities were helpful or incorporated into law enforcement activities in a meaningful way. Several law enforcement agency partnerships were noted, but few respondents reported building partnerships with community groups, non-profits, or schools. Partnerships in the community are important as their members often possess valuable information about local violent crimes, convey information about police initiatives to each other, and support the relationships necessary to build fundamental trust and legitimacy (Goldsmith, 2005; Ratcliffe, 2019, p. 65).

Survey results indicated partnerships with researchers and analyses of electronic crime incident data were lacking. About 43 percent of respondents indicated that no one had analyzed their crime data and 21 percent of respondents left the question blank despite the availability of options such as "other" and "none of the above," implying that in most departments (64 percent)

respondents were not aware of analyses being conducted by anyone. Data collection/analysis was often perceived as the least critical need to address top public safety threats. When proper training and a working relationship with the community are lacking these are of course critical areas to address. However, research and analysis are also essential to intelligence-led and problem-oriented policing approaches (Ratcliffe, 2019) and should be incorporated into strategic planning for violent crime reduction. With some support, a cyclical model like Scan, Analyze, Respond, and Assess (SARA) (Eck & Spelman, 1987) should be possible for most departments. Furthermore, a rigorous evaluation and assessment of violence reduction strategies should include the following activities, conducted in a jurisdiction's focus area and a similar area for comparison (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2001):

1. An initial scan of current activities.
2. Collection of targeted crime data.
3. Implementation of new crime reduction activities/strategy (focus area only).
4. Tracking of activities during implementation.
5. Collection of targeted crime data.
6. Statistical comparisons of crime data between the focus area and comparison area, from before the implementation started and after the implementation is completed.

These steps are more easily achieved with research collaborators. The value law enforcement officers provide PSN via their local knowledge about crime and street-level enforcement activities is mirrored by the value offered by researchers who can assist in problem analysis and provide expertise in theory, evidence, and assessment. The PSN effort will face considerable challenges in developing a strategy without problem analysis and researcher and law enforcement partnerships.

### **Future Research**

This survey was an initial exploration into violent crime in Central Illinois. More research is needed on violent crime in the area and ongoing efforts to reduce it. Future surveys might address law enforcement knowledge about and openness regarding a problem-oriented policing approach and gather community perceptions about violent crime, while interviews and focus groups could address operational difficulties departments face and identify key training needs. Secondary crime data analyses could provide further details on gun and gang crime in the Central region and the response by police. For example, examining the frequency of illegal guns seized during unrelated calls and the processes that led to those seizures could point to areas of opportunity for improved practices that leverage existing gun laws and ordinances. Policing activities most likely to produce and leverage community cooperation also should be examined.

Many of those surveyed indicated their department used social media to communicate with the public. This mode of communication is inexpensive and accessible, but the rationale behind its use is unclear, and its effect on police-community relations or investigations is similarly unclear. Law enforcement use of social media has not been extensively examined empirically. If community cooperation is an issue, there may be opportunities for innovation in practice and research regarding the way law enforcement communicates with and relates to the public, including via mobile applications, text alert sign-ups, neighborhood flyers, public signage, and other modes. Existing research in the field of public relations may offer knowledge relevant to the enhancement of community relationships within the law enforcement context for the purposes of PSN.

Finally, the focus of this survey was specific to law enforcement perspectives and activities. The PSN leadership team may want to consider what components of a comprehensive and sustainable approach are not examined in this survey (e.g. social services availability, community perspectives, etc.) and seek additional knowledge about them. Police and sheriff agencies may initially take the lead in planning and developing PSN activities, but prosecutors, judges, community leaders, and social service providers should play a role eventually.

### **Conclusion**

This study employed a survey to examine the scope of public safety threats across Central Illinois, the characteristics of violent crime related to shootings, gangs, and domestic contexts, and past responses and future capacities of law enforcement to address violent crime. Domestic violence was the most common violent crime reported by surveyed law enforcement personnel in Central Illinois. The survey also revealed gun and gang-related crime was concentrated within a few jurisdictions and, overall, perpetrators and victims of violent crime are not wildly different in this area than in others – young adults and mostly family or acquaintances with each other. Strategies implemented to reduce violent crime varied among respondents, but focused/targeted, hot spots, or street stops approaches were most familiar to departments. Lastly, the elements needed to implement a problem-focused, data-driven approach to violence reduction exist within many jurisdictions, but enhancements in specialized training and local community and research partnerships may be needed.

The findings broadly outline the environment surrounding violent crime in Central Illinois from the perspective of participating law enforcement agencies. Though respondents indicated gun and gang crime are not widespread in Central Illinois, those areas experiencing these problems can form comprehensive partnerships to target gang activity, address the involvement of guns in domestic conflicts and drug markets, examine non-fatal shootings, and effectively leverage resources for prevention and intervention.

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## Appendix A

**Table 1**  
**Official Plans for Listed Strategies**

Strategy (officially planned to...)	...Continue or			None of these
	...Begin	Expand	...End	
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Crackdowns	3	19	0	42
Focused/targeted enforcement	6	29	0	29
Hot spots policing	5	26	0	33
Disorder policing (i.e. broken windows)	7	13	1	43
Street stops	1	28	0	35
Gun buy back	0	0	0	62
Enhanced offender prosecution	2	10	0	52

Source: 2018 ICJIA survey of Central Illinois police and sheriff departments





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