

**PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS:
A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO LOCALLY ADDRESS GUN VIOLENCE**

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Summary: Project Safe Neighborhoods was initiated by the US Department of Justice in 2001 as a comprehensive national program to reduce gun violence in cities across the nation. It is coordinated locally by the US Attorney's Offices in each of the 94 federal judicial districts and includes significant participation by local and state law enforcement, prosecutors, correctional agencies, as well as community residents and groups. Funding was provided through the US Department of Justice to support these initiatives that also included support for a local research partner.

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) built upon several previous successful initiatives including the Boston Ceasefire project, the Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative, and Richmond's Project Exile. PSN employed a research driven problem solving approach to reduce firearms violence through enforcement, deterrence, and prevention. At the core of Project Safe Neighborhoods was the understanding that while there were successful previous models upon which to build, there was also considerable variation in the level and nature of gun and gang violence across American communities. Thus, this initiative needed to have the flexibility to be designed to address local problems. Rather than adopting an inflexible program design, PSN strategies and programs were focused upon the factors driving gun and gang crime in each jurisdiction. Locally based research was used to focus the specific interventions on the most critical aspects of gun and gang violence in the jurisdiction and local, state, and other federal agency partners shared their understanding and intelligence regarding the local gun violence problem.

Data and Methods: Since the inception of Project Safe Neighborhoods, the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State has provided training and technical assistance in researched based problem solving for teams from each of the 94 judicial districts. In addition, the MSU research team has been involved in a long term study of the impact of PSN on gun crime. Initially this involved case studies of innovative strategies as well as comprehensive PSN strategies in multiple jurisdictions across the country. These activities involved the collection of some data from all 94 jurisdictions and more intensive research activities in seven jurisdictions.

Findings: The results of these activities indicate that highly focused and intensive intelligence driven enforcement and prosecution activities can be effective in the reduction of gun crime. Further, the direct communication of a real and credible deterrence message to high risk offenders coupled with the offer of social services and treatment can be effective in reducing community violence.

Evidenced Based Policy: The creation of research and intelligence driven interventions that are focused on higher risk individuals and groups is a very promising strategy to reduce gun violence in America's communities. However, such successful strategies are dependent upon maintaining a consistent leadership and on-going commitment from the criminal justice agencies and community organizations involved.