Implementation of the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV):
Interim Report*

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ABSTRACT

The Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) is a multi-agency and community collaborative effort initiated in 2007 designed to quickly and dramatically reduce gun-violence and associated homicides, with sustained reductions over time. The initiative is a focused-deterrence strategy which is modeled after the Boston Gun Project from the mid-1990s. A partnership among multiple law enforcement agencies (local, state and federal), social service providers, and the community has been established to deliver a clear message to violent street groups: the violence must stop. This message is communicated through a number of different mechanisms, including call-in sessions with probationers and parolees; direct contact through street workers (street advocates), police, probation, and parole officers; community outreach; and media outlets. Law enforcement agencies have gathered intelligence on violent street group networks, and consequences are delivered to the street groups that continue to engage in violence. Those offenders seeking a more productive lifestyle are provided streamlined social services, training, education, and employment opportunities. The community and law enforcement are working as partners and as a result, strengthening their relationship. This report documents the initiation of CIRV, initial assessments of CIRV activities, and future plans.
INTRODUCTION

Overview

The number of homicides in the City of Cincinnati has increased rapidly over the last decade, with a modern-day high of 89 homicides recorded for 2006. In response, Cincinnati city officials and other key stakeholders developed the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV), a multi-agency collaborative program based on the Boston Gun Project of the 1990s and adapted to the specific needs of Cincinnati. This initiative relies on delivering messages of specific deterrence to those who generate and sustain a culture of violence, coupled with support services to facilitate the transition to a nonviolent lifestyle. Similar interventions in other cities have been successful, producing a 30 to 70 percent reduction in group-related gun violence within the target population.

CIRV’s objective is to dramatically and quickly reduce the frequency of street violence in Cincinnati and continually reduce the frequency over time. CIRV has coordinated multiple law enforcement agencies, service providers, and community members to ensure that those who participate in violent groups receive due consequences and those who choose to transition to a nonviolent lifestyle receive the appropriate services in the most effective, efficient, and respectful manner possible. This initiative has organized itself into four strategy teams (see Figure 1 below):

- **Enforcement Strategy Team**: The strategy of this team is to form a law enforcement partnership capable of identifying and focusing enforcement on chronic violent groups. Comprised of the Cincinnati Police Department, Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office, Hamilton County Adult Probation, Ohio Adult Parole Authority, Hamilton County Prosecutor’s Office, U.S. Attorney’s Office, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and supported by the Ohio State Attorney General’s Office and the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services, this team is committed to organizing its efforts to share information across agencies and consistently respond to group-related gun violence.
• **Services Strategy Team:** The strategy of this team is to form and continually improve a life-change system that successfully engages members of violence-prone groups and moves them to an employment-based lifestyle. Comprised of a lead employment and social services agency and street-level advocates, this team strives to provide immediate and tailored services to individuals choosing to leave the life of violence. The lead agency, Cincinnati Works, conducts intake and case management, while the street-level advocates continually deliver the message of nonviolence and work one-on-one with those who are motivated to change and to ensure they are accessing and utilizing the necessary resources.

• **Community Strategy Team:** The strategy of this team is to form a partnership to work with affected communities to articulate norms and expectations. Members of this team represent various interests and groups within the community who reject violence and work toward rebuilding the community. Members include community influencers, religious leaders, former elected officials, parents of murdered children, and ex-offenders. Drawing upon their collective leadership, this team represents the moral voice of the community by delivering a clear message of nonviolence and rejecting the norms and narratives of the street which promote violence.

• **System Strategy Team:** The strategy of this team is to develop and implement a system that insures permanence and quality assurance. The success of CIRV relies on the coordinated partnership of various law enforcement agencies, service providers, and community groups. To ensure long-term success, the CIRV team has adopted corporate principles designed to increase transparency, accountability, and sustainability. Specifically, the implementation of CIRV is guided by the strategic planning principles of objectives, goals, strategies and measures (OGSM) which help to organize, prioritize, and delegate the work. The System Strategy Team oversees the implementation of these principles and will be leading the process and impact evaluations of CIRV.
Figure 1. CIRV Organizational Structure

- **Governing Board**
  - Role: Overall responsibility and key barrier busting

- **Strategy/Implementation Team**
  - Role: Develop/deploy strategy; Get resources; Monitor results; Enable key decisions

- **Enforcement Team (Strategy 1)**
  - Robin Engel: Co-Owner
  - James Whalen: Co-Owner

- **Services Team (Strategy 2)**
  - Ross Love: Owner

- **Community Team (Strategy 3)**
  - Victor Garcia: Co-Owner
  - Stan Ross: Co-Owner

- **System Team (Strategy 4)**
  - S. Gregory Baker: Owner

- **Mayor Mark Mallory (Governing Board Chair)**
  - Councilman Cecil Thomas (Chair-Law and Public Safety Committee)
  - City Manager Milton Dohoney
  - Dr. Victor Garcia (S/I Team Co-Chair)
  - Chief Thomas Streicher (S/I Team Co-Chair)
  - S. Gregory Baker (Project Manager)
  - Lieutenant Colonel James Whalen
  - Dr. Robin Engel
  - Dr. John Eck
  - Mr. Ross Love
  - Professor David Kennedy
  - Mr. Stan Ross
  - Mr. Keith Lawrence (Resource)
  - Mr. Al Spector (Resource)
Description of the Focused-Deterrence Model

CIRV is based on the premise that a majority of violence stems from respect issues, rather than directly from drug market-related conflicts. As such, it focuses on disrupting the group dynamic which promotes violence as a method of addressing displays of disrespect. CIRV has identified the key actors who generate violence in Cincinnati, the groups in which these individuals are enmeshed, and the relationships between the groups. Representatives from these groups are convened as needed to receive a specific message of deterrence and are told to relay this message to others in their group. Because many of these individuals are under probation or parole supervision, there is legal authority to mandate their attendance at “call-in” sessions.

During the call-in sessions, a clear and consistent message of nonviolence is delivered by law enforcement officials, social service providers, and community members. Law enforcement representatives explain there will be focused scrutiny on subsequent violent incidents; the next homicide will result in swift, targeted enforcement by any legal means available of the entire group that is affiliated with the individual responsible for the homicide. Though only the shooter will be held accountable for the homicide itself, the ongoing criminal activities of other group members will receive increased scrutiny by law enforcement based on any past or future criminal behavior. Service providers present alternatives to violence by offering job, educational, and social services to those individuals who want them. Community members demand for an end to the violence, articulating the damage it produces and invalidating any excuses for the violence. The general message to be conveyed is, “We will help you if you will let us, but we will stop you if you make us.” These messages are designed so that group members perceive they have a face saving exit from a violent lifestyle their choices have led them into.
The success of CIRV rests on the relentless delivery of the promises made during the call-in sessions. CIRV has mobilized the strategy teams described above with prepared responses. Law enforcement responds swiftly to homicides subsequent to the call-in and intelligence is organized to aid in this effort. Service providers are organized to meet the individualized needs of those who choose to transition to a life of nonviolence and intake processes are streamlined to facilitate this process. Community members have continued to deliver the message of non-violence subsequent to the call-in, presenting a united front with law enforcement.

Following the first shooting after the call-in session, representatives from the street groups are reconvened. The messages are reiterated, law enforcement describes what happened to the groups that perpetrated the violence following the first call-in session, and the representatives are told to take this information back to their groups (see reference section for a list of articles that describe this model in further detail). The following report documents this specific process as it has been implemented in Cincinnati.

PRE-INTERVENTION DATA COLLECTION

Prior to planning and executing the call-in sessions, it was necessary to determine: 1) the nature of the homicide problem in Cincinnati, i.e., the extent to which street groups were responsible for homicides, and 2) detailed information about those street groups. These data needs led to two separate data collection efforts. First, the Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) conducted a homicide review aimed at gathering descriptive information about homicides in Cincinnati for a single year. Second, CPD, in cooperation with Hamilton County Adult Probation and the Ohio Adult Parole Authority, gathered information on violent street groups
citywide. These processes, as well as the information they produced, are described in detail below.

**Homicide Review**

The focused deterrence approach which has been successful in other cities in reducing homicide is designed to disrupt the group dynamic which promotes violence as a method of addressing displays of disrespect. Though Cincinnati experienced a rapid increase in homicides from 2000 to 2006, there had been no systematic review of homicides to determine if the street group dynamic observed in other U.S. cities was in fact driving the rise in homicide in Cincinnati. As part of the CIRV project, the CIRV team and the Cincinnati Police Department completed a homicide review to determine the extent to which homicides in Cincinnati are related to street groups and their members.

The purpose of the homicide review was twofold. First, it helped determine whether a focused deterrent approach that targets groups would be appropriate for addressing Cincinnati’s homicide problem by illustrating to what extent homicides were being perpetrated within a group context. If it was found that homicides were largely among individuals with no ties to street groups, CIRV would be inappropriate. Second, determining the proportion of homicides that are related to street groups reveals what proportion of homicides this type of initiative could potentially impact. CIRV should not be expected to reduce homicides unrelated to violent street groups; that is, success should be assessed in reference to the target population homicides. The results from the homicide review are reported in Figure 2.
As demonstrated in Figure 2, of the 83 homicides recorded during a one-year period (from June 8, 2006 to June 6, 2007), the overwhelming majority of victims were Black males killed by firearms. Most importantly for CIRV, approximately 74% of the homicides involved a victim and/or an offender known by law enforcement to be associated with a violent street group. This homicide review lends further support to the experience of law enforcement that Cincinnati’s homicide problem is largely related to dynamic group processes. Specifically, this homicide review suggests that a violence reduction initiative that aims to disrupt the group dynamic that promotes violence is an appropriate option for addressing homicides in Cincinnati. In addition, the homicide review indicates that such an initiative could potentially impact approximately 74% of homicides in Cincinnati.
Street Group Review & Network Analysis

On May 11, 2007, the CIRV team gathered information from Cincinnati Police Department officers to identify: 1) street groups, 2) their members, and 3) their relationship to one another. Specifically, CPD’s District Captains were instructed to select beat officers “who had their ears closest to the streets” to attend an 8-hour meeting. The morning began with an enthusiastic endorsement of the CIRV process by Chief Thomas H. Streicher, Jr. the co-chair of the CIRV Strategy/Implementation Team, followed by a description of the process by Lieutenant Colonel James Whalen, the co-owner of the CIRV Law Enforcement Team.

Next, Professor David Kennedy from John Jay College and members of the UC research team asked the officers to approach the front of the room, district by district, and assemble around large scale district maps of Cincinnati. The officers identified the street groups one by one, marked their locations on the map, and provided a verbal description to the research team of the groups’ members, illegal activities, alliances with other groups, and disputes with other groups. The research team recorded this information which was later entered into individual and group databases.

Though there was slight variation across the districts, the police officers in the room generally displayed detailed knowledge about the street groups in Cincinnati and their members, geographical locations, and the relationships among them. Three additional follow-ups with officers in the Districts were completed by the UC research team to confirm the validity of the data, as well as to gather additional information. This information was shared with representatives from Hamilton County Adult Probation and the Ohio Adult Parole Authority. Individual probation and parole officers added further intelligence information. This coordinated effort resulted in an estimate of 800 – 1,000 individuals associated with 67 known violent street
groups of varying levels of violence: 41 high violence groups, 19 medium violence groups, and 7 low violence groups. In addition, 648 known individuals associated with 67 street groups were identified by name and control number. The juvenile and criminal records of these individuals are summarized in Table 1 below.

As Table 1 indicates, this population is incredibly active, generating an average of over 35 juvenile, misdemeanor, and felony charges. The average number of felony arrest charges per individual was 7.6 and over 91.0% with previous arrest charges for violent offenses; over one-third had 10 or more felony arrest charges. These descriptive statistics on the street group members’ juvenile and criminal records suggest that: 1) the CIRV Law Enforcement Team has effectively identified the most active repeat violent offenders in the city, and 2) targeting this small population of very active offenders has the potential to substantially reduce violence citywide.

Beyond knowing the individuals who comprise these groups, it was also necessary to compile information about the groups themselves. This information has been visually documented in two ways. First, the UC research team created citywide and district maps to display the geographical locations of street groups and their varying levels of violence. Second, the UC research team conducted a network analysis to display the relationships among these
groups. These analyses are not included within this report due to the confidential nature of the highly sensitive intelligence information gathered.

**DELIVERING THE MESSAGE**

Successful implementation of the CIRV process rests on: 1) providing meaningful and predictable consequences for individuals and their associates who perpetrate violence, 2) communicating these consequences to the offender population in an accurate and direct manner, and 3) giving these consequences legitimacy by invoking the moral voice of the community to reject the violence. In practice, CIRV has used call-sessions as its primary vehicle of communication, though these sessions are also supplemented by other methods.

**Call-in Sessions**

In 2007, CIRV held four call-in sessions, two on July 31st and two on October 3rd. This section provides a general overview of the messages conveyed at the sessions. In the week prior to the sessions, individuals who were identified by the Law Enforcement Team as being part of a violent street group and under probation or parole supervision were notified in writing to attend a call-in session as a provision of their court supervision. Every effort was made to have these notifications hand-delivered by the supervisee’s probation or parole officer.

The call-in sessions were held at the Hamilton County Courthouse and were attended by representatives from the CIRV law enforcement, services, and community strategy teams. When the probationers and parolees arrived at the courthouse, they were directed to a “staging area” where they were required to sign in and received a packet from the U.S. Attorney’s Office containing the federal sentencing guidelines for firearms violations of the criminal code. Additionally, they were given a card with contact information for the Services Team. These
individuals were then told to wait, creating a stir of curiosity among the supervisees, as they tried to figure out what the purpose of the meeting was. Once signed in, the supervisees were instructed by the Sheriff’s Deputies to turn off their cell phones, take off their hats, and file into the other courtroom.

To convey the importance of these sessions, Judge John Andrew West, Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas, called a special session of court to order and called the docket, taking attendance from the list of individuals mandated to appear based on their parole or probation supervision requirements. Judge West then closed the special session, turned the courtroom over to Dr. Victor Garcia and Chief Thomas Streicher, co-chairs of the Strategy Implementation Team, and left the courtroom.

In each call-in session, Dr. Garcia began the proceedings by vividly describing the impact of violence on the community, and the increasing number and severity of gun-shot victims that he has treated as a trauma surgeon at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital and Medical Center (CCHMC). This dramatic introduction was followed by representatives from the Law Enforcement, Social Services, and Community Teams who communicated a message of non-violence. Chief Streicher followed with a message delivered in a paternal tone, noting that the new initiative was business, not personal. This style seemed to resonate with group members, some of whom noted that this approach differed from their customary negative perceptions of law enforcement. Members of the Law Enforcement Team informed the audience of the new law enforcement strategy. Specifically, the individuals were told that homicides in Cincinnati committed by members of a violent group would attract the coordinated efforts of local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. That is, not only will the individual directly responsible for the homicide be pursued, but also the members of his group for any illegal
activities. They were informed that there are resource limitations within the criminal justice system that preclude law enforcement agencies from pursuing every offender to the fullest potential of the law. However, individuals affiliated with groups that engage in violence would be prioritized. Space in the jail would be made available, plea bargains and other deals would not be made, probation and parole would be revoked, the U.S. Attorney would review cases for federal prosecution, etc. In other words, the way of doing criminal justice business in Cincinnati has changed for those individuals who are affiliated with violent groups.

Following the delivery of the law enforcement message, representatives from the Services Team informed the audience that there would be a range of social services available for those individuals seeking to change their lives and transition out of the violent street life. All probationers and parolees were given a contact card when they signed in at the beginning of the session, and they were instructed to call the CIRV services number if they had a desire to change their lives. During this time, members of the Services Team emphasized that the service delivery process would be respectful and provide individuals with the support they need to change their lives, provided that they are truly are willing to change their behavior. In addition, Cincinnati Human Relations Commission (CHRC) streetworkers spoke to the audience and assured them that they would be personal advocates to those who sought help by navigating individuals through the system and confirming that they are getting the help needed.

Finally, members of the community expressed the pain, loss, and fear created by violence. Specifically, parents who had lost their sons to violence told their stories, describing the deep pain that they carry with them daily and demonstrated to the audience what their parents will endure if they are murdered. Leaders from the faith community reminded the audience that they are better than the violence that they and their associates inflict. They demanded an end to
the violence, but they coupled that demand with the hope that the audience would choose to
transition to a healthy and productive lifestyle, rather than be pursued by the collective efforts of
law enforcement. Ex-offenders spoke next, and invalidated the norms and excuses which
support the violent lifestyle: their enemies caught up with them; their associates turned on them;
Serving long prison sentences was incredibly difficult; their friends did not visit them in prison;
their siblings died from gun violence; their mothers endured unimaginable pain; their girlfriends
and spouses left them; they missed seeing their children grow up; there was no glory in “the
life,” only pain and regret. This was an incredibly powerful message delivered by a group of
men who had been in a similar position themselves.

In closing, the probationers and parolees were reminded of the message that the violence
must stop and urged to take the following information back to their groups: 1) for the next
homicide, every member of the group will be pursued to the fullest potential of the law, 2) there
is help available – call the number, and 3) you are better than this – the violence must stop.
Appendix A includes an essay written by Michael Blass, Director of Law Enforcement Services
at the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) who was an observer of the first call-in
session. This essay eloquently captures this moving experience.

Attendance at Call-in Sessions

Of the 401 individuals identified prior to the first call-in session, 76 (19%) were under
parole or probation supervision. These 76 supervisees were notified to attend one of two call-in
sessions on July 31, 2007; 55 (72%) of those notified attended. Of the 58 street groups identified
prior to the July 31st sessions, 29 (50%) were represented at the call-in sessions: 23 of 37 (62%)
high violence groups were represented, 6 of 14 (43%) medium violence groups were represented,
and 0 of 7 (0%) low violence groups were represented.
Of the 643 individuals identified by the Law Enforcement Team prior to October 3, 2007, 112 (17.4%) were notified to attend one of two call-in sessions on October 3, 2007; 91 (81.3%) of those notified actually attended. Of the 67 groups identified known to law enforcement, 36 (53.7%) were represented at the October 3rd call-in sessions: 27 of 41 (65.9%) high violence groups were represented, 9 of 19 (47.4%) medium violence groups were represented, and 0 of 7 (0%) low violence groups were represented.

Collectively, the July 31st and October 3rd call-in sessions communicated the CIRV message to 117 individuals in total (29 attended two sessions), and 41 of 67 (61.2%) groups in Cincinnati: 31 of 41 (75.6%) high violence groups, 10 of 19 (52.6%) medium violence groups, and 0 of 7 (0%) low violence groups. A third round of call-in sessions is scheduled for February 28, 2008. At these sessions, probationers and parolees will be updated about CIRV, enforcement actions taken against specific groups involved in homicides will be reviewed, and individuals will again be told there is help available for those who want to transition to a different life. Individuals who were in their seats just months ago but are now working with CIRV services will also speak at the sessions.

**Beyond the Call-in**

Because the call-in sessions cannot reach the entire target audience, CIRV explored various other communication vehicles for delivering the CIRV message. Immediately following the call-in sessions on July 31, 2007, a radio bulletin was played every hour for a full day on 101.1 the WIZF, a local hip-hop radio station popular among CIRV’s target audience (see Appendix B for a copy of that bulletin).

Following the second set of call-in sessions on October 3, 2007, CIRV’s Strategy/Implementation Team decided to use CPD officers to communicate the CIRV message
to those groups who had yet to be represented at a call-in session. A select group of officers in each district made contact with the remaining groups. The purpose was to inform them of the new law enforcement strategy, as well as demonstrate to these groups that the police know their identities and their associates. In addition, the officers collected data on the amount of information these groups know about CIRV when they are first approached. Once analyzed, this will shed light on whether the group networks are viable paths of communication.

**DELIVERING ON THE PROMISES**

As previously noted, successful implementation of CIRV rests not only on articulating the new consequences for being involved with a group responsible for a homicide, but also delivering on the promises made during the call-in sessions. First, law enforcement must actually respond in a swift and certain manner to group-related homicides following the call-in sessions. Second, service providers must actually be prepared to meet the varied needs of those individuals who opt out of a violent lifestyle in exchange for social services. The following section discusses the law enforcement response to group-related homicides and the service response to requests for help.

**Response to Group-Related Homicides**

Following the July 31, 2007 call-in sessions, Cincinnati experienced a particularly violent August with 11 homicides. The Law Enforcement Team responded to these homicides in a swift manner. Investigations revealed that five of the 11 homicides were related to individuals identified as involved in violent street groups. As articulated at the call-in session, the Law Enforcement Team pursued not only the shooters in these homicides, but also other group members for additional law violations.
The resulting enforcement actions of four of the five groups were highlighted at the October 3rd call-in sessions by Lieutenant Colonel James Whalen of CPD to demonstrate that the Law Enforcement Team was, in fact, implementing the group-focused enforcement plan in response to homicides in Cincinnati. This follow-up by the Law Enforcement Team was critical: they did exactly as promised, and then shared that information to other group members as an example of what will happen to them if they continue their affiliation with violent groups. This demonstrated that law enforcement efforts in Cincinnati had changed for members of violent groups. Individuals were told that if a member of their group commits a homicide, their related and unrelated criminal activities would become the focus of law enforcement. Lieutenant Colonel Whalen illustrated this fact by displaying posters with the enforcement actions taken against the shooters and their associates (see Appendix C).

**Response to Requests for Services**

It was also essential for the legitimacy of CIRV that the Services Team meet their promises regarding services available to the target population. To this end, the Services Team developed an intake process which ensures that individuals who contact CIRV: 1) are contacted by a streetworker within a short period of time to schedule an assessment, 2) meet the street group criteria for receiving CIRV services, 3) complete an assessment to determine needs, and 4) are assigned a streetworker. The CIRV client then works with his case manager and streetworker to develop a list of goals that will directly influence the services delivered and outcomes.

As the CIRV team moved from planning to operation, the role of the CHRC streetworkers was changed to accommodate the growing need for service delivery. Initially, the streetworkers joined CIRV as members of the Community Team, with the tasks of communicating the CIRV message to individuals on the street and continually invalidating the
norms and narratives of the street culture that promotes violence. However, as the Services Team developed, the CIRV team reallocated the use of the streetworkers to assist with service delivery. The streetworkers now function as personal advocates for those going through CIRV services, rather than doing strictly outreach on the streets.

Since the first set of call-in sessions on July 31, 2007, 161 individuals have contacted CIRV for services. Of these 161 individuals, 128 are currently actively engaged in the program. Each of these individuals is assigned a personal CHRC streetworker and is taken through the CIRV services process at Cincinnati Works. Table 2 below documents the demographic information for CIRV clients. The average CIRV client is 28 years old, black, male, and single. The majority (with information available) have children and felony records at assessment. Only 19% of these individuals attended a call-in session. All others heard about CIRV through some other mechanisms. This indicates that the CIRV message is being distributed on the street to the population of interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Description of Group Members Requesting Services (n=128)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of CIRV Clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school diploma at intake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed at intake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felony record at intake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a call-in session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Updated February 4, 2008. Information on all items is not available. Percentages reported are the valid percents.
As shown in Table 3 below, the overwhelming majority of CIRV clients were contacted by a CHRC streetworker within two days of their initial phone call, had an assessment scheduled within five days, and completed that assessment within 10 days.

Table 3. Services Requested and Provided to CIRV Customers (N=128)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number of Clients</th>
<th>Percent of Total Clients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contacted by streetworker within 2 days of initial contact</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment scheduled within 5 days of initial contact</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment completed within 10 days of initial contact</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requested employment services</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requested education assistance</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended support group</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse treatment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger management</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing assistance</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting assistance</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation assistance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health treatment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care assistance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit recovery assistance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Updated February 4, 2008.

Table 3 also documents that nearly all of the CIRV clients requested employment services (98%), and a majority also requested education assistance (63%). Of the 81 CIRV clients that requested educational services, the majority (68%) were interested in obtaining a GED, while the remaining individuals requested assistance with vocational training (15%) and college (16%). Other services of interest included parenting assistance (29%) and housing assistance (14%). Nearly 29% also attended support group sessions. This information is also visually displayed in Figure 3 below. Of the 128 clients actively engaged with the CIRV Services Team, only six
(4.7%) decided not to continue participating, and only one individual was uncooperative with service providers.

Also demonstrated in Figure 3 below, the overwhelming majority (92.8%) of CIRV clients have signed up for job readiness. Figure 3 also demonstrates the continued progress of CIRV clients as they become prepared to enter the workforce. Of the 41 individuals who have completed job readiness training, 30 have obtained employment, and 25 have sustained employment. It is expected that these numbers will continue to grow as the clients work their way through the Cincinnati Works process. In summary, the CIRV Service Team has experienced a level of success that is unparalleled to any other city engaging in a focused-deterrence violence reduction strategy. That is, the initial evidence suggests that the services component of CIRV has experienced more success in this short time period than any other known jurisdiction.
Figure 3. Services for CIRV Clients (N=128)
Updated, February 4, 2008

Job Readiness Training (N=125)

Signed up | Started | Completed | Obtained Employment | Retained Employment
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
116 | 69 | 41 | 30 | 25

Requested Education Assistance (N=81)

- GED: 68%
- College: 16%
- Vocational: 15%
- High School: 1%

Employment: 125
Education: 81
Support group: 37
Substance abuse: 6
Anger management: 3
Housing: 18
Counseling: 37
Parenting: 4
Transportation: 3
Mental health: 4
Health care: 2
Credit recovery: 2
HOMICIDE TRENDS

Figure 4 below displays the number of homicides in Cincinnati from 1991 to 2007. Cincinnati experienced an average of 41.3 homicides per year from 1991-2000, a relatively low per capita compared to other large Ohio and regional cities. During this period, the highest year was 1991 with 57 homicides; the lowest was in 1998 with only 28 homicides recorded by CPD. Since 1998 homicides steadily increased, reaching a modern-day high of 89 homicides in 2006, with an average of 73.3 homicides per year from 2001 to 2006. In 2007, homicides declined to 68. This is the biggest single year decline in homicides since 1991.
Figure 4. Homicides in the City of Cincinnati - 1991-2007
Figure 5 displays the monthly cumulative homicide totals (the figure for each month represents the yearly total to that date) in Cincinnati from 2005 to 2007. When comparing 2007 to the previous two years, Cincinnati began to see a reduction in the cumulative homicide count in April. As Figure 6 displays, this reduction in the cumulative total is attributed to lower (or equal) monthly homicide counts from March through July of 2007 compared to prior years. August 2007 produced eleven homicides, making it the worst month of the year with respect to the number of homicides. Despite this August spike, the yearly homicide total for 2007 was still substantially lower compared to the prior two years. In fact, the lower yearly homicide total of 2007 can also be attributed to reductions in homicide in the final quarter of the year. In 2007, homicides in September and October were lower than in prior years. There were four homicides in November, making it similar to prior years. Finally, 6 homicides were committed in December, making it relatively less violent than December 2006, but still above the December 2005 total.
Figure 5. Monthly Cumulative Homicide Totals in Cincinnati, 2005-2007
Figure 6. Monthly Homicide Count in Cincinnati, 2005-2007
Based on experiences in other jurisdictions implementing a focus-deterrence strategy, CIRV’s impact would be expected to begin in earnest after the second call-in session (i.e., after Oct. 3, 2007). It is believed that at least two direct messages to the street groups are necessary before behavior on the street is altered. CIRV is specifically designed to impact gun-related violence in a target population – chronic violent offenders affiliated with street groups. Figure 7 below displays the most recent trends in homicides when victims are separated into two categories: 1) Group Member Involved (GMI) – displayed in red, and 2) non-GMI – displayed in gray. GMI homicides are those homicides where the victim, the offender(s), or both are known by the law enforcement team as affiliated with a violent street group. These homicides do not have to be committed by a group – rather they are identified as group-member involved if the victim and/or suspect is affiliated with a group (and therefore within our target population for violence reduction).¹ As displayed in Figure 7, in the months following the second call-in session (i.e., Oct. 2007 – Jan. 2008) the number of GMI homicides has decreased. While not definitive, this decrease is consistent with the expected reductions in violence commonly associated with this type of focused deterrence strategy.

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¹ In some cases (particularly early in the investigation), the suspects are unknown. If the victim is not a known member of a street group and the suspect is unknown, the law enforcement team considers the following aspects of the incident to determine if the homicide should be classified as GMI: intelligence information, circumstances surrounding the incident, neighborhood / location / time of day of the incident, and the nature of the victim’s behavior prior to the incident. Based on a totality of the circumstances, the law enforcement team determines whether a homicide meets the GMI-related criteria.
Figure 7. Group Member Involved (GMI) Homicides in Cincinnati (July 2006 - January 2008)

Likely GMI Homicide* — Non-GMI Homicide**

* Likely GMI homicide indicates the victim and/or suspect(s) were affiliated with a violent street group; homicides with unknown suspects fitting the criteria of GMI homicide are classified as GMI
** Non-GMI indicates neither the victim or offender(s) were in a violent street group
Figure 8 also displays a comparison of non-fatal shootings between 2006 (in gray) and 2007 (in red). As displayed, the last quarter of 2007 has experienced a sharp decline in the number of non-fatal shootings compared to the same months in the previous year. While this initial decline in homicides and non-fatal shootings in 2007 is promising, Cincinnati is still well above the average number of homicides and non-fatal shootings compared to the 1990s. As CIRV progresses, a more systematic evaluation of homicides and wounding related to the violent group networks will be conducted. Although promising, it is simply too early in the initiative to definitively determine CIRV’s impact on gun violence in the city. As stated in the 2008 action plans listed below, CIRV will continue to conduct formal call-in sessions (scheduled for February 28, 2008), along with informal and voluntary call-ins sessions.
Figure 8. Non-fatal Gunshot Wounds in Cincinnati, OH*

*Excludes injuries sustained from BB, pellet, and paintball guns
ACTION PLANS – 2008

Each of the four teams has recently drafted a series of action plans for 2008 in an effort to achieve the ultimate goal of immediate and sustained homicide reduction over time. The 2008 actions plans for each strategy team are detailed below.

Law Enforcement Team 2008 Action Plans:

- Plan and conduct an “informal meeting” with those who have opted for services
- Plan and conduct a “voluntary” call-in in the community
- Complete police outreach to groups not reached in the call-ins
- Establish an organization and procedure within CPD to ensure new homicides are reviewed and acted upon if they warrant CIRV action
- Conduct a quarterly review of the need for a call-in; execute call-in as needed
- Maintain engagement of the Law Enforcement Team through quarterly updates with CIRV partners
- Update the network analysis annually
- Complete demographic data collection on the target population
- Explore a strategy to address the violent juvenile groups not previously addressed

Services Team 2008 Action Plans:

- Increase engagement (i.e. the number of group members who engage in the program by completing the assessment process) by publicizing success stories (targeting credible role models/group leaders)
- Increase the success rate (i.e. the percent of those engaged who achieve sustained employment) by:
  - Improving the ability to track and retain in the program those who demonstrate interest, and
  - Continuing to increase participation in and quality of support groups and other key personal development services (e.g. substance abuse treatment, transportation, housing alternatives, parenting help, etc)
- Build system capacity by:
  - Increasing the number of employers committed to use CIRV program graduates
  - Funding/recruiting the additional streetworkers needed to achieve the strategy
  - Preparing a second “lead agency”

Community Team 2008 Action Plans:

- Complete development of “the community moral voice message” and develop plans and management systems to deliver the message to key community stakeholder groups (e.g. neighbors of target groups, larger black community, broader community with applicable resources)
• Identify other “influentials” and engage them in their messaging role to various stakeholder groups
• Develop a tracking and reporting system to ensure that all relevant groups and individuals have been informed. Also include tracking and reporting of institutions to which we are targeting communications
• Develop visual aids marketing plan for use by the moral voice team to get the message out
• Develop and implement a plan to build street worker organization and individual capacity to further improve getting the message out, while mentoring those who have signed up for services
• Communicate directly to target-relevant parents, including a parents support group, and grandparents to help them deal with and talk to their children
• Develop and implement a plan to communicate to religious institutions in a way that enables them to help get the message out to the community and the target population

System Team 2008 Action Plans:

• Complete interim assessment of CIRV progress toward reducing homicides and shootings
• Renew University of Cincinnati Institutional Review Board approval
• Develop and implement the external communications plan
• Complete a sustainability assessment and select and enable priority action steps
• Develop and implement a scorecard system for tracking results for Goals and Measures
• Complete OGSM development, including 2008 priority action plans and institute quarterly reviews (covering one or two strategies each month)
• Design and implement a best practices system to capture the key work components of CIRV
• Develop an organized approach for expanding CIRV outside Cincinnati
• Conduct sustainability benchmarking visits with relevant cities that have preceded CIRV using the model
• Complete evaluations of CIRV homicides and shootings results, including both the absolute impact evaluation and the process evaluation to show how CIRV components have contributed to reductions

CIRV is also responsible for keeping key stakeholders and the community engaged in the initiative. This responsibility is met through the delivery of presentations and/or providing written updates to a wide variety of audiences (see Appendix D for a list of CIRV presentations delivered and currently scheduled for delivery). In addition, the team provides the city with monthly progress reports documenting the activities of the project generally, along with the separate efforts of the law enforcement, social services, and community teams. Finally, team
members have selectively engaged the media to continue to inform the public regarding our efforts. A listing of CIRV related interviews with televised, radio and printed media are listed in Appendix E.

**SUMMARY**

In its first year of operations CIRV has successfully implemented a multi-faceted multi-agency community based effort to reduce homicides. A much better understanding of the reasons for killings in Cincinnati has been reached. The law enforcement partners have successfully delivered a strong message that the stakes for being involved in a killing have dramatically increased. Services partners have successfully demonstrated that members of high risk groups who seek to leave violence behind will be assisted in their efforts. Community partners have given strong messages that violence is no longer acceptable. And the systems partners have developed processes to ensure successful and continued implementation through establishing objectives, goals, and measures. All this has been associated with the largest decline in homicide in recent memory.

In the year to come these efforts will be strengthened to further decrease group related homicides. CIRV continues to evolve and to incorporate new partners and resources. Finally, CIRV will work to consolidate and sustain efforts to keep homicides low in the years to come.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

ESSAY

Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence

The CIRV “Call-In”: Reflections on a Profound Experience

Written by: Michael Blass, Director of Law Enforcement Services
Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services
August, 2007

I saw something profound today.

I saw the same players and actors, those nameless, faceless people who make up the good guys and the bad guys and the ordinary guys in any community. They are all different from one another, but they are mirror images of the players and actors in communities all across this nation. They have roles to play, these good guys, bad guys and ordinary guys…and the roles are uniform and consistent throughout America’s communities. But today those roles were played to a different script.

I saw something profound today.

I watched the confused faces of those we commonly call the bad guys—angry young men, almost exclusively African-American, as they filed into a room full of criminal justice professionals, social service providers, and community members. I saw, with exceptional clarity, the fear in their eyes, the apprehension on their faces, soon replaced with seemingly awkward attempts to project confidence, indifference, in some cases, perhaps, hostility. But I saw angry, street-savvy young men who were caught off-guard and struggling to find a comfort zone in what must surely have felt to them like an artificial environment. As they settled into their seats they attempted to coax from within themselves a more comfortable demeanor while their genuine discomfort collectively and silently resounded across the room. These angry young men, used to being in control in the incredibly brutal environment of the mean streets, were noticeably off-balance and unsure of themselves.

That was profound.

I watched as the first speaker, Dr. Victor Garcia, stood and addressed the group. He was the first to deliver this simple message: “The violence—the killing and the shooting—must stop.” He provided startling statistics that supported his claim that black men killing black men has the potential to destroy the black race. He spoke of his personal experiences as a trauma surgeon saving, and losing, the lives of young men and women who are victims of violence. He told the angry young men that he loved them, that they have value to their community, and that they are better than their violent actions imply. It was clear that he wanted more for these familiar
strangers than they seemed to want for themselves. I saw a few angry faces soften, almost imperceptibly.

That was profoundly interesting.

I watched as law enforcement, prosecutors, social service providers, and community members addressed the angry young men, most of whom were attentive if for no other reason than to satisfy their curiosity. The speakers talked about consequences resulting from remaining in a violent lifestyle, but they spoke just as eloquently and passionately—perhaps more so—about how to exit the cycle of violence. They offered assistance, and expressed feelings of personal faith, community hope, and love for the angry young men. I saw the faces of a few young men appear slightly less angry. I saw a few young men choke back tears. I saw in the eyes of a couple of young men the tears of a painful existence—the tears that come from the realization that reality and truth have just intersected within one’s consciousness; perhaps tears reflecting a recognition that they could dare to be hopeful about their future. I saw one young man raise his shackled hands above his head and exclaim “I never knew there was this much love out there…seriously, I never knew it.” I saw several young men openly express a desire for respite from the pressures of their violent lifestyle. With a shrug of his shoulder, feigning nonchalance, one of the most angry young men said “I’d like to change because I’m getting older and I’d like to get away from the violence.” Nobody argued for the status quo. Not one young man tried to justify violence, or argue that change was impossible, futile, or that their situation was hopeless.

That is profoundly surprising.

I watched mothers bravely balance their own personal anger and grief on the scales of hope as they tearfully and painfully explained how their sons were murdered and how these murders have affected them, their families, and their communities. I heard mothers describe their experience of emotional survival in the company of the misery that comes with a parent outliving a child. I saw a few young men swallow hard and look away—but they couldn’t stop listening and couldn’t find a suitable distraction to escape the brutality of the truth these women spoke. I saw mothers speak through tears, and I saw young men hang their heads, stare at the ceiling, or simply sit with eyes transfixed on these fearless and charitable women as their words cut mercilessly through the room.

That is profoundly different.

I watched the faces of the law enforcement officers assigned to accompany the young men. I saw a subtle, yet measurable change on their faces as well. Over the course of a couple of hours, their facial expressions changed from those of cynicism or polite boredom to attention and curiosity. In a couple of instances, I saw those public servants struggle to control their emotions, just as I was. I suspect that those law enforcement officers, like me, have had their moments of living the lives of angry young men, too, albeit from a different vantage point than those they were there to protect or guard. Too much anger leads to many harmful emotions, the most common among the protectors probably being best described as hopeless exhaustion. Regardless of our politics or our propensity for honest introspection, somewhere within us we all seek unity and healing. Long ago we grew weary of living through the experiences of angry young men dying at our feet. I
believe I saw recognition in the expressions of those law enforcement officers that maybe there are solutions to what we may have considered insolvable problems. Perhaps the seeds of change were planted in the fertile soil of public service today.

That is profoundly refreshing.

I saw former gang members, convicted murderers, drug dealers—those reformed men and women who now reach out to others as their penance for what they’ve taken in a previous, unrepentant life—speak passionately and eloquently, pleading with the young men to take the help being offered. I saw some of these former criminals weep for the soon-to-be lost young men, and maybe in some way for themselves, and then be embraced by society’s elite, both literally and figuratively. The young men saw that, too, and I suspect the significance of that solitary, sincere, and meaningful demonstration of community was not lost on them. And I saw the change that is coming.

It is profound change.

I walked away from this experience transformed from an observer to a participant, born of a renewed sense of hope and the warmth of a newly sparked inner fire. I believe again—I believe that there is hope for the hopeless, healing for the angry, justice for the community. I believe that lives are being changed and will be changed. I believe that we—the community in its purest form and finest sense—will prevail, through the certain challenges and general messiness that human interactions create, through the inevitable setbacks, and the new obstacles that success itself will bring. We will prevail; we will be stronger, wiser, and more united as a community and, perhaps, eventually, as a people.

This experience was profoundly meaningful.

Michael Blass
August, 2007
APPENDIX B

RADIO NEWS BULLETIN

CINCINNATI INITIATIVE TO REDUCE VIOLENCE (CIRV)

In breaking news…

A broad coalition of African-American community and neighborhood representatives from throughout Cincinnati announced a partnership with city, county, state and federal officials to put in place plans designed to significantly reduce gun violence here.

This “Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence” has identified the street groups that are responsible for much of the violence.

Several dozen African-American neighborhood leaders and activists spoke to a number of group members in meetings today at the County courthouse. They delivered the message that the violence in our neighborhoods is out of control and that the community is demanding that it stop now.

"We value and care about our youth – and we have to protect our neighborhoods – for that reason we have to draw the line here and now. We are prepared to help those who are caught up in 'the life', if they are willing to step forward and seek help – but the shooting must end no matter what", said Reverend Calvin Harper. This message was echoed by many other community members during the meeting.

Group members were told about a new law enforcement strategy. Beginning immediately, the next time a member of a group kills anyone, not only will they be pursued for the murder but, in addition, any other members of their group involved in criminal behavior will be pursued. The coordinated resources of city, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies will be brought to bear on the entire group.

A team of service providers communicated their commitment to help group members who want off the streets. Education, mentoring, treatment and employment services are being made available to those who want to change their lives for the better.

"The community has spoken. The violence is intolerable,” said Mayor Mark Mallory with council members at his side. “That message is being delivered to those who need to hear it most. We have put together the resources that can help those who want to pursue employment, as an alternative to a life scarred by illegal and violent behavior. Those who continue the shooting will be dealt with swiftly from this point forward. The community will accept nothing less than this.”
APPENDIX C:

CIRV GROUP LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION
FAY APARTMENTS
HOMICIDE

ERIC BRIGGINS
(DECEASED)

LARRY HALL
(SHOOTER/ DECEASED)

WESLEY GILL
(SHOOTER/ARRESTED FOR MURDER)

JONATHA N AUSTIN
ARRESTED FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING/DRUG POSSESSION)

CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT
ARRESTED FOR CCW/WEAPON UNDER DISABILITY)

ALLEN STEED
ARRESTED FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING)

KNOWN ASSOCIATES

FOUR OTHERS ARRESTED FOR PUBLIC NUISANCE

STYLES HUMMONS
ARRESTED FOR MURDER)

JASPER

(LGETAWAY DRIVER/WANTED)

CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT
ARRESTED FOR CCW/WEAPON UNDER DISABILITY)

ALLEN STEED
ARRESTED FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING)

KNOWN ASSOCIATES

FOUR OTHERS ARRESTED FOR PUBLIC NUISANCE

STYLES HUMMONS
ARRESTED FOR MURDER)

JASPER

(LGETAWAY DRIVER/WANTED)
PEACE BOWL FOOTBALL GAME
HOMICIDE

DANTE ALLEN
(SHOOTER/CHARGED WITH MURDER)

DARNELL HIGGINS
(HANDED HANDGUN TO SHOOTER
ARRESTED WITH SHOTGUN NEXT DAY
CHARGED WITH CCW)

DANTE MARTIN
(ARESTED FOR CARRYING A
CONCEALED WEAPON AND
POSSESSION OF A DANGEROUS
ORDINANCE)

SYLVESTER ALLEN
VICTIM OF ROBBERY
COUSIN OF DECEASED

EARNEST CREAR
(DECEASED)

(DISPOSED OF HANDGUN)
RICHWELL COURT
HOMICIDE

ROBERT MACK
(ARRESTED AND INDICTED
FOR MURDER)

SHON WALLER
(ARRESTED AND INDICTED
FOR MURDER)

ANTHONY WILHITE
(INDICTED FOR MURDER)

COREY BROWN
(INDICTED FOR MURDER)

DANIEL WALKER
(DECEASED)
Kendall Dudley Homicide/ Boudinot Ave.

ROBERT TAYLOR
(ARRESTED AND INDICTED FOR MURDER AND AGGRAVATED RIOT)

KENNETH BAILY
(CHARGED WITH AGGRAVATED RIOT/ INDICTMENT FOR MURDER IS PENDING)

DANIEL “MATT” RUEHL
(INDICTED FOR AGGRAVATED RIOT)

DURRELL CLAY
(INDICTED FOR AGGRAVATED RIOT)

KENDALL DUDLEY
(DECEASED)

KNOWN ASSOCIATES
APPENDIX D:

CIRV Presentations


Engel, R. S. Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV). Presentation delivered to the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital and Medical Center Board of Directors, Cincinnati, OH, April 20, 2007.

Engel, R. S., Garcia, V. Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV). Presentation delivered to the Cincinnati Gang Initiative Group, Cincinnati, OH, April 24, 2007.


Engel, R. S. Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV). Presentation delivered to the MARCC Delegates Council, Cincinnati, OH, May 9, 2007.


Scheduled Presentations:


Engel, R. S. 2008. Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV). Presentation to be delivered to Hamilton County Juvenile Court, Cincinnati, OH, February 27, 2008.

## APPENDIX E:
### Media Reports on CIRV

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<td>War on Crime May Go 'Holistic'</td>
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<td>12/29/2006</td>
<td>Expert: City Can Reduce Crime</td>
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<td>UC Experts Set to Help City Fight Rising Homicide Problem</td>
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