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OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

First Edition: Version I

What is the National Network for Safe Communities?

The National Network for Safe Communities is a coalition of law enforcement (police chiefs, prosecutors, corrections and community corrections officials etc.) community leaders, service providers, mayors, city managers, street workers, scholars and others concerned about the impact of crime and current crime polices on communities. **The National Network for Safe Communities believes:**

- The levels of violence in America are unacceptable
- The realities of drug markets are unacceptable
- The tension between police and minority communities is unacceptable
- The levels of incarceration in America are unacceptable

The primary purpose of the Network is to support jurisdictions around the country in implementing two highly effective **crime reduction strategies** – the group violence reduction strategy first launched in Boston, Massachusetts, and the drug market strategy first launched in High Point, North Carolina. These strategies are described in greater detail in the following sections of this FAQ document.

The Network is designed to support its members by creating a national community of practice, raising the visibility of its members' work, offering them technical support, recognizing and helping others learn from their innovations, supporting peer exchange and education, and conducting research and evaluations. It is guided by the **Leadership Group**, a smaller group of jurisdictions working together to address the core issues of the Network's mission.ⁱ

What is the Leadership Group?

The Leadership Group is a select group of jurisdictions committed to working with the National Network for Safe Communities to further develop, demonstrate, and represent a new national standard in addressing group violence and overt drug markets. The purpose of the Leadership Group is to reset national practice, norms, and expectations around group violence and drug market crime. Members of the Leadership Group will assist one another and other National Network members with their work; conduct research; address core issues related to crime, crime prevention, community and race; write and publish articles in scholarly, professional, and public outlets; and promote these themes in their own professional circles.

The National Network will convene teams from the Leadership Group jurisdictions – including law enforcement officials, community figures, social services providers, and scholars – at least twice a year for the next five years. Together these teams will address the core issues of the Network's mission: how to fully implement the strategies; how to ensure their sustainability and institutionalization; how to reduce the unintended harms of traditional enforcement practices; race and perspectives on crime and law

enforcement; small-group and street culture dynamics and how they produce crime; truth and reconciliation processes and their lessons for crime prevention; social service and employment strategies for serious offenders; and managing and institutionalizing pragmatic crime prevention strategies incorporating all these elements.

The Leadership Group currently includes:

Boston, MA

Chicago, IL

Cincinnati, OH

High Point, NC

Los Angeles, CA

Milwaukee, WI

Newark, NJ

Providence, RI

Oakland, CA

The State of California (multiple localities)

The State of North Carolina (multiple localities)

Why should my jurisdiction join the National Network? What are the benefits?

The National Network for Safe Communities is a supportive community of practice for jurisdictions implementing or seeking to implement one or both proven crime reduction strategies. A substantial body of research and field experience shows that these strategies greatly reduce violent and drug crime, reduce incarceration, strengthen communities and rebuild relationships between law enforcement and communities. The Network is designed to support its members by raising the visibility of their work, offering them technical support, recognizing and helping others learn from their innovations, supporting peer exchange and education, and conducting research and evaluations. The Network provides members and prospective jurisdictions the opportunity to learn from, support, and work with one another through peer exchanges, direct technical assistance, webinars, publications, research support, working sessions, conferences, dissemination of best practices and innovations as well as other mechanisms.

For more information on the National Network for Safe Communities, including how to become a member jurisdiction, go to www.nnscommunities.org.

NATIONAL NETWORK STRATEGIES: **“CEASEFIRE” GROUP/GANG VIOLENCE REDUCTION STRATEGY**

I. THE BASICS

What is Operation Ceasefire?

The National Network’s group violence reduction strategy, first demonstrated as “Operation Ceasefire” in Boston in 1996 and subsequently in many other jurisdictions, relies on direct communication with violent groups by a partnership of law-enforcement, service providers, and community figures. Together the partnership delivers a unified “no violence” message, explains that violence will bring law enforcement attention to entire groups, offers services and alternatives to group members, and articulates community norms against violence. When properly implemented, rapid reductions in serious violence are routine, with low levels of actual enforcement and the enthusiastic support of affected communities.¹ The strategy is flexible and can be adapted to any given jurisdiction, but relies on a core set of operational ideas that must guide any adaptation. For a report on the development, implementation and impact of the original strategy in Boston [click here](#).

Why does the group violence reduction strategy focus on groups?

Ceasefire did not begin with a focus on groups but with a focus on homicides, shootings and other acts of extreme violence. However, when examining these types of crime, data has repeatedly demonstrated that, as an empirical matter, they are committed predominately by readily identifiable groups of offenders. Research in every city in which the Ceasefire strategy has been implemented found that groups are dramatically overrepresented in the commission of violent crime as victims, offenders or both. For example, recent research with front-line officers in Cincinnati identified 60 criminal groups composed of 1500 individuals, less than 0.5% of the city’s population, who were associated with 75% of the homicides in the city—either as victim, perpetrator, or both.

What is a call-in?

A call-in is a meeting of law enforcement representatives, community influentials, and group-involved offenders, usually on probation or parole, used to communicate the strategy’s key messages to the offenders and, through them, back to the entire groups with whom they are associated. In the call-in, the law enforcement-community partnership clearly communicates: (1) a credible, moral message against violence; (2) a credible law enforcement message about the consequences of further violence; and (3) a genuine offer of help for those who want it.

The strategy involves other methods of communication, but the call-in is the traditional tool. Community supervision agencies are operational partners in the implementation of the strategy; these agencies can direct group members to attend a call-in as a condition of their supervision. Recently, practitioners in several cities have even held successful Call-Ins by asking group and gang members to attend voluntarily. The call-in has been found to be an efficient and effective method of communicating the strategy's key messages back to the entire universe of violent groups in a given jurisdiction.

Why does the strategy differentiate between “gangs” and “groups”?

Primarily because the majority of urban violence is driven by groups. All gangs are groups, but all groups are not gangs. An exclusive focus on “gangs,” as often defined, will exclude a significant number of groups that contribute heavily to serious violence, such as loose neighborhood drug crews, and our experience is that worrying about whether a particular city has “gangs,” or whether a particular group is a “gang,” is an unnecessary distraction. The simple fact is that many high-rate offenders associate in groups, and that these groups drive serious violence. Many (and often most) such groups will not fit the statutory definition of a “gang.” Nor will they meet even the common perception of what constitutes a gang. Such groups may or may not have a name, common symbols, signs or tags, an identifiable hierarchy or other shared identifiers. Many of these groups are local drug crews or neighborhood sets that are very criminally active and sometimes violent, but are nonetheless generally disorganized and lack identifiable leadership.

In jurisdictions across the country, this distinction is confirmed by law enforcement officials and others who state that, “we have a lot of violence, but we don’t have a gang problem like other cities.” In fact, *most* cities do not have what most of us would think of as a “gang” problem. Having groups and not gangs is the case in *most* cities. Highly structured, organized, purposeful gangs with identifiable hierarchies are rare in most American cities; in most cities where they do exist, they are still the exception rather than the rule. (On closer examination, even the more structured gangs sometimes found in Los Angeles, Chicago, and elsewhere usually turn out to be much less organized and purposeful than is usually thought.) Where they do exist, they can be effectively engaged by the Ceasefire strategy in the same way as other violent groups. Any additional level of internal organization or discipline is often in fact useful, since hierarchical, organized gangs can more effectively control the actions of individual members once it is clear that entire groups will be held accountable for violence.

What is the impact of Ceasefire?

The typical impact of Ceasefire is a 35-50% reduction in homicides and a significant but sometimes lesser reduction in non-fatal shootings citywide. Often larger reductions are achieved in a specific, highly victimized demographic. An evaluation of Boston, for example, the site of the original Ceasefire implementation, showed a 50% drop in homicides citywide and a two-thirds reduction in homicide among men aged 24 and younger. Cities including Indianapolis, Indiana, Chicago, Illinois, Lowell, Massachusetts

and Stockton, California, amongst others, have experienced similar reductions as measured by formal, quasi experimental evaluations.² Go to www.nnscommunities.org and click on “Research”_to read the formal evaluations conducted of the Ceasefire strategy to this date. These violence reduction figures mirror numerous accounts from other sites that have not yet been formally evaluated.ⁱⁱ

Why did the evaluations not involve random assignment?

For the most part, the citywide, comprehensive nature of these interventions makes it impossible to set aside groups or individuals as controls for a random assignment experiment. The approach is designed to operate wherever there is violence citywide, to influence the entire network of violent groups simultaneously, and to amplify the effect of the intervention beyond those individuals and groups touched by it directly. However, in Chicago, beginning in 2002 under the auspices of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), criminologist Tracy Meares and her colleagues implemented a “reentry” variation of the strategy focused on individual parolees in a set of extremely violent neighborhoods. This design allowed Meares’ team to use a more sophisticated evaluation design with other neighborhoods as controls. The best evaluation of any of these interventions available to date, it found a 37% reduction in the monthly homicide rate, with very rapid impact when the strategy was implemented.³ Subsequent work, currently in publication, by Meares and her research team found dramatically lower recidivism for the offenders with whom her project intervened.⁴

² Braga, A. A., Kennedy, D. M., Waring, E. J., & Piehl, A. M. (2001). Problem-oriented policing, deterrence, and youth violence: An evaluation of Boston’s operation Ceasefire. *Journal Of Research In Crime and Delinquency*, 38, 195–226.

² Piehl, A. M., Cooper, S. J., Braga A.A (2003). Testing for structural breaks in the evaluation of programs. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 85(3), 195-226.

² McGarrell, E. F., Chermak, S., Wilson, J.M. & Corsaro, N. (2006). Reducing homicide through a lever-pulling strategy. *Justice Quarterly*, 23(1), 226.

² Braga, A. A., Pierce, G.L., McDevitt, J., Bond, B.J., & Cronin, S. (2008). The strategic prevention of violence among gang-involved offenders. *Justice Quarterly*, 25 (1), 132-162.

² Braga, A. A. (2008). Pulling levers focused deterrence strategies and the prevention of gun homicide. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 36(4), 332–343.

² Tita, G., Riley, K. J., Ridgeway, G., Grammich, C., Abrahamse, A., & Greenwood, P. (2003). Reducing gun violence: Results from an intervention in East Los Angeles. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

² Papachristos, A., Meares, T., Fagan, J. (2006). Attention felons: evaluating Project Safe Neighborhood in Chicago. Institute for Social and Economic Policy and Research, Columbia University, September.

³ Papachristos, A., Meares, T., Fagan, J. (2006). Attention felons: evaluating Project Safe Neighborhood in Chicago. Institute for Social and Economic Policy and Research, Columbia University, September.

⁴ A summary of this research is available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1326932>.

Why does Ceasefire work?

The strategy has three key elements that address what really drives violence on the street, including the dynamics between and within groups. 1) It communicates to groups the community's strong desire that the violence stop; that offenders are valued and the community wants them to succeed ; 2) it offers help to group members who want it; 3) it creates certain and credible consequences for homicide and shootings that are directed at the group as a whole. Because groups drive violence, a group focus for legal consequences is far more meaningful than the usual legal attention given to individuals. Each element of the strategy is of equal importance. All pieces work together and reinforce one another.

The strategy is *high-activity* but *low-enforcement*. The work is done by setting and maintaining clear standards, not by large numbers of arrests and crackdowns. Communities typically welcome it, and complaints against police typically fall. Community figures get a chance to say to group members, in safe settings, that their behavior is intolerable, and gang members clearly often listen. As groups come to understand that violence by one may lead to attention to all, the peer pressure that drives the violence is reversed. Community figures learn that law enforcement is not draconian and indiscriminate but can selectively focus on those individuals and groups who are truly dangerous to the community and who have rejected genuine offers of help. Law enforcement learns that nearly all of the community loathes the violence, will stand up and say so and will support reasonable enforcement action. Many group members, who themselves find the violence intolerable and worry about their friends and loved ones, readily take the "honorable exit" that clear standards provide. As groups lose their power on the streets, and the streets become safer, their appeal to other young people diminishes.

Why is this strategy focused on minority communities?

It is not. The strategy is focused on preventing and reducing serious violence. It is consistently true that the highest rates of victimization are found in minority communities. Unfortunately, the unintended harms created by traditional law enforcement strategies have also hit minority communities the hardest. As described in our [Statement of Principles](#), the National Network seeks not only to reduce serious violence and eliminate overt drug markets, but also to reduce arrest and incarceration and promote genuine reconciliation between law enforcement and minority communities.

What happened in Boston? Why did Ceasefire eventually fall down?

In Boston, the institutional actors who had created Ceasefire lost their focus on the operation around 2000. It's often been said that this was about the loss of funding. It was not. It was about the loss of commitment. A lessening of commitment by the key agencies, in particular within law enforcement, caused the initiative to unravel (for an in-depth examination of this issue, [click here](#)). However, the group violence strategy is now being put back into place by Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis, has already

experienced reductions in homicides and shootings, and the city has demonstrated its commitment to the approach by becoming a member of the National Network's Leadership Group.

What is the difference between the Boston "Ceasefire" model and the Chicago "Ceasefire" model?

Both "Ceasefire" approaches utilize street outreach workers to engage with gang members to attempt to prevent retaliatory violence, and encourage individuals who are at risk of violence to engage in more mainstream lifestyles by offering services and alternatives to street life. However, while Chicago Ceasefire relies primarily on a combination of this outreach, social services and community anti-violence events and demonstrations, the National Network's group violence reduction strategy is a broader approach involving three sets of actors: law enforcement, social service providers, and community representatives. The strategy requires all three to collaborate closely and focus their efforts on the very small group of actors most likely to be perpetrators or victims of violence. Violence can be dramatically reduced when community members and law enforcement join together to directly engage with offenders and clearly communicate: 1) a credible, moral message against violence; 2) a credible law enforcement message about the consequences of further violence; and 3) a genuine offer of help for those who want it.

Key differences between the National Network's group violence strategy and Chicago Ceasefire include: In the National Network strategy, law enforcement put groups on **prior notice** that violence will be met with a specific and swift response, and that it will be directed at the gang or group as a whole rather than at individuals. In addition, social service providers create **service structures** devoted exclusively to group members. Finally, community members with authenticity in the eyes of the gang members articulate anti-violence norms **in partnership** with law enforcement.

II. MISCONCEPTIONS

Ceasefire is a law enforcement gang-suppression strategy, right?

No, it is not. The strategy is not focused on suppressing gang activity. The strategy is instead aimed at working with communities to influence the behavior of groups and group members and to provide social services opportunities for those who wish to turn their back on crime. It involves giving prior notice to group members about their legal vulnerabilities and the way law enforcement will be used against them if they do not stop the violence. When the strategy is at its most effective, it involves **less** law enforcement than under normal conditions. However, a core law enforcement element *is* necessary to craft effective community responses to these problems, including establishing group accountability for violence which reverses the group dynamics that promote violence. The law enforcement element in the strategy is designed to deter, to prevent violence rather than suppress it. At the end of the day, however, we endorse

using law enforcement to stop violent groups that have been put on notice that their own communities need them to stop, have been offered help, have been warned about legal consequences, and continue to kill and hurt people.

It is a carrot-and-stick approach, right?

No. Potential violent offenders have three choices: continue as before, take advantage of the help they've been offered, or stop behaving violently. Many group-involved offenders do not actually require law enforcement responses, nor do they take advantage of the social services in most jurisdictions. Most of them simply stop behaving violently. The carrot-and-stick formulation also misses what we believe to be the most powerful element of the strategy, which is the clear articulation of community norms against violence and for public safety.

Is this “hug-a-thug?”

No. The strategy puts a very high premium on personal accountability for behavior, on setting clear community standards and having people live up to them and on formal legal consequences when offending actually occurs. There is nothing “soft” about any of that. At the same time, as both a moral and practical matter, the strategy seeks to make available the help offenders need to redirect their lives and treats even seasoned offenders respectfully and as rational human beings. In practice it turns out that even many seasoned offenders respond very positively to being treated in this way. Recent research supports the proposition that treating offenders respectfully and as rational agents can improve their perceptions of the legitimacy of the criminal justice system, which in turn can increase their compliance with the law without actual enforcement actions.⁵

Our offenders don't care; they are too hardcore and heartless for this to work. What do we do?

This comment comes up repeatedly: “It worked there, but it won't work here.” It often seems that this is true, but in practice it is not. We now have a very extensive record of work which shows that street crime, street dynamics and offenders are not that different from place to place. Hence it will work in your jurisdiction. If it works in some of the most violent neighborhoods in Chicago, with homicide rates similar to those in Haiti, it will work anywhere. One of the NNSC Leadership Group Chiefs, Tom Streicher in Cincinnati, likes to tell a story about how the gang member he'd honed in on as the toughest of a very tough group stood up suddenly in Cincinnati's first Call-In: and said he was sick of the violence and wanted out. Experience shows that even the most seasoned offenders are often sick and tired of the violence and want it to stop.

⁵ Papachristos, A., Meares, T., Fagan, J. (2006). Attention felons: evaluating Project Safe Neighborhood in Chicago. Institute for Social and Economic Policy and Research, Columbia University, September.

What about gang prevention services?

Gang prevention work seeks to prevent gang membership. So far this has not proven possible as a practical matter. Our approach begins with the commitment to making a larger transformational difference on the ground by reducing the serious violence that overwhelmingly affects group-involved individuals, their families and communities. We have enormous respect for the work of the prevention community. But, as an empirical matter, we do not see serious group violence problems resolved even through the best prevention efforts. In the hardest-hit communities, there are relatively few gangs and relatively few gang members; even fewer gang members are shooters and killers. Those community members who become gang members and shooters are often disengaged from institutions and forums where gang prevention efforts take place, such as schools. Gang prevention efforts have to be almost perfectly effective in order to stop these young men from becoming gang members. This is even more difficult in a setting in which active gangs “model” gang behavior, create real risks for young people, and make joining gangs appealing and in some sense rational. We think the most important gang prevention work is to control current gangs, make them less appealing to young people, and make communities safe. Our work is antiviolence, anti-homicide work. It is not about gangs.

How can we solve the problem of group violence without addressing education and poverty?

Part of the strength of the approach is that it mobilizes antiviolence, pro-civil sentiment that is extremely strong even in the most disadvantaged communities. In the poorest and most neglected communities around the nation, almost all young men in fact avoid being gang members and becoming involved in serious violence. It simply turns out that it is not necessary to fix all these institutions to stop the killing. At the same time, much of the larger work of community development does require public safety – it is impossible to promote economic development and institutions such as schools and hospitals in the midst of high levels of violence. Thus the core purpose of our work is to create the kind of conditions within communities that are needed to do the more important longer term work. Public safety, and a clear, unified voice against violence and for individual and community success, is our starting point.

What if my jurisdiction doesn't have organized gangs?

Then it is like almost all other jurisdictions out there. The National Network's community of practice avoids the word “gang” because most jurisdictions do not have gangs. Most of them have very loose, disorganized, usually neighborhood-based groups. They tend to be very fluid. Their actions are not coordinated and they have no leadership. They are groups, not gangs. The Ceasefire strategy turns out to work perfectly well with group activities as well as the rarer version of gang activities.

III. GETTING STARTED

How do we get started?

Thoroughly explore the National Network for Safe Communities' website, www.nnscommunities.org, which offers a wealth of information, including basic overviews of the strategies, implementation guides, media coverage, formal evaluations, case studies, information on upcoming events, training opportunities etc. The National Network hosts an occasional webinar series that can help jurisdictions interested in implementing one or both of the strategies get started and address particular areas of interest. Check the website regularly for more information or contact infonnscc@jjay.cuny.edu with specific inquiries.

What resources are necessary?

Most jurisdictions do not require new funding. Our presumption is that implementation of the strategy will be resource-neutral in any particular place. In practice, the community capacity to set strong new standards against violence does not require new funding. It simply requires finding and working with people eager to express those standards, and every community is full of such people. Social services are available but usually not well organized for this particular population, and can be coordinated in a way that is far more effective. Law enforcement has the capacity to do the necessary group-focused enforcement when required. Rather than additional resources, doing this work requires understanding the logic of the strategy and a sustained local commitment to creating it and keeping it in place.

Who are the essential players or stakeholders?

Fundamentally, three groups need to be involved: the affected community, social service providers and law enforcement. The law enforcement group typically includes the police department, district attorney, United States attorney, probation, parole, federal enforcement agencies (DEA, FBI, ATF), and sheriff. The social services group includes agencies able to provide education, job training and placement, life skills, counseling, mentoring, housing, emergency assistance, substance abuse treatment and the like. The community group includes ex-offenders, gang outreach workers, mothers of murdered children, faith representatives, local elders and other influentials.

How can you get judges on board? What is their role?

You can't get judges on board. Judges have a very particular and appropriate role which properly prohibits them from committing to a strategy like this. It is not acceptable for judges to say that particular cases will be treated differently when they come before the court. It is not possible or appropriate to lobby judges. In practice, the difference is made on the law enforcement side by raising the focus and quality of investigative and the prosecutorial work – not by altering judges' behavior.

How do you identify gang leaders?

Most of the groups that drive the violence in most jurisdictions do not have meaningful leadership. The reason that they are so violent is often *because* nobody is in charge. It turns out not to be necessary to identify gang leadership as long as the group can be identified and communicated with and, when necessary, be made the focus of law enforcement attention. That is all that is needed.

How should we organize the community? Our community doesn't care about the violence. What can we do?

It is our invariable experience that communities affected by violence do care about violence. They may be traumatized; they may see no productive action to take; and they may be so angry at law enforcement that they do not speak out. But they do care. In practice, all that is necessary to make the strategy effective is to reach out to individuals in the community who are already passionate and active around this issue. Each community has these people and they are readily identifiable. Working with them, at least at the outset, is all you need to develop and implement the strategy and to make it effective. Part of the reason that many strategies do not work is because they rely on impossibly high goals such as “organizing the community.” We don't expect most people in well-off suburbs to volunteer constantly for the greater good of the community; agree on everything and work together in complicated ways; why should we expect it of the very stressed residents of more troubled communities? If law enforcement, social service and government professionals work in the right way with the right community partners, that's enough.

How should we organize social services?

Sufficient social services are almost always available for the purposes of the violence reduction strategy, but are generally not well organized for this particular population and can be coordinated in a way that is far more effective. Generally, these services should be organized such that there is one access point available to group and gang members; this access point has one phone number that will be answered; and group and gang members who call that number can get help immediately. It is also critical that social service providers, and their partners in law enforcement and the community, not promise group and gang members anything they can't deliver, particularly jobs. This promise can often not be delivered on, and it is **not** appropriate to promise anyone a job **in exchange** for telling them to stop killing people. The community has a moral right to demand the violence stops—period. Independent of that, the partnership would also like to help group and gang members. The social service promise is simply “we want to help you and we will do the best we can.”

What is the role of ex-offenders in the strategy?

Offenders and potential offenders are influenced the most strongly by people who they respect and perceive as authentic. Communities that suffer from violence are typically home to large numbers of convicted or formerly incarcerated people who have learned their own lessons about crime and violence

and no longer wish to act in this way. They frequently feel a very powerful desire to give back to the community and have tremendous standing in eyes of younger offenders. Working with them in the call-ins, in street outreach, or in diversion programs, can be extraordinarily powerful. Therefore, ex-offenders are among the strongest allies we have in delivering an antiviolence message. In some jurisdictions some of these people work as formal “outreach workers” or “streetworkers;” in other jurisdictions they are involved in less formal ways.

How do you get the selected offenders into the room?

The classic call-in model operates by using probation and parole authority. The violent groups in a given jurisdiction are identified; the individual members of those groups are identified; probation and parole examine those names to identify anyone under their authority. As a matter of practice, most violent groups have one or several members on probation or parole. These individuals are then directed to attend the meeting. Through the call-in, these probationers and parolees become the messengers back to the group with which they are associated.

In recent years, several jurisdictions have experimented with different call-in formats and methods for inviting group members to attend. Early experience indicates that it may not be necessary to compel attendance, via probation or parole, in all circumstances. If offenders can be notified in the right way, for example through direct outreach by a street worker or by a respectful law enforcement officer or local community activist, many offenders will attend call-ins voluntarily. These “voluntary” call-ins are still being developed; new jurisdictions should start with the more traditional version that relies on probation and parole supervision.

How do you get gang members to change their lives? What about people who don’t want to turn their lives around?

Part of the realization that has led to this approach is that most offenders in fact do not like what is going on. They are not getting rich; they are not having fun; they are deeply worried about their families and loved ones. All of them have lost friends to killings. Many have been hurt themselves. And many of them are eager for a safe way out. For some, this simply means turning their back on the violence. Others take further steps towards mainstream life. But particularly where violence is concerned we have found that even offenders on whom nearly everyone has given up are sick to death of the fear and the shootings and the killings. This does not mean they will “turn their lives around,” but it does mean that stepping away from violence is a welcome move for many. Many then also want to take further steps towards a more pro-social life.

People still need to make money. How do you address that?

Being violent is not an essential part of being a criminal and stopping the violence doesn't mean that all crime stops. This can be hard for many people to accept. The strategy does not pretend to put an end to all illicit activity. However, it does very effectively remove violence from illicit street markets that are sources of income for many group and gang-involved offenders. While there will remain crime in these neighborhoods, people will get back public spaces; families can go outside; kids can walk to school; people do not have to worry about random gun shots. This is not a trade-off or a get-out-of-jail-free card. It is not a negotiation. Morally and practically, communities simply do not need to offer or provide offenders with jobs or other resources to demand that the killing stop – communities have an independent right to be safe regardless of the local labor market or barriers faced by offenders. Our strategy begins by simply recognizing that the first priority should be to prevent serious violence and that it is not necessary to end all offending in order to end homicides and shootings.

What if you are in a really big city? What if you are in a small city?

We have seen the strategy work in essentially the same ways in quite small jurisdictions as well as rather large ones (Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, Cincinnati). In the smallest jurisdictions it may be possible to follow the basic ideas without all the formal steps; there may be just one or a few violent groups that can be engaged with without, for example, formal call-ins. If you're in that situation we can introduce you to others who have worked out such operations. For the largest or most active cities it may be necessary to "roll out" the strategy in particular areas rather than go city-wide from the beginning. We're currently working on that approach in both Chicago and Los Angeles.

How do you sustain the group violence strategy?

There is ample evidence that the strategy works to reduce crime, reduce incarceration, and strengthen communities. Sustainability is a central issue. The overall record shows clearly that as long as the strategies are taken seriously and kept in place by jurisdictions they continue to be effective. What is required here is not particularly sophisticated, but is a matter of common sense focus and accountability. Many cities have implemented the strategy as a relatively low-priority special project without very much in the way of high-level municipal or agency commitment, project staffing, funding, or other elementary measures. **Each locality must prioritize the strategy as a primary response to violence and develop a governance structure and mechanisms to ensure sustainability and accountability that make sense and work within the local operational and political context.** This generally includes:

1. A clear, public commitment that the City will implement this approach as a primary operational response to gang violence. The commitment should encompass the basic operational elements of the strategy and the requisite law enforcement, social service, and community responses.

2. The designation of a senior level **project manager** who will oversee and coordinate the overall effort. This person must be able to effectively work with law enforcement, community and social service constituencies; have sufficient respect and local “clout” to manage agency and personality disagreements; ensure ongoing participation in the inter-agency working group; have direct access to relevant decision makers and be able to work effectively with local media. Ideally, this project manager is also supported by a locally-based research director and research support staff who can provide analytical and research capacity to the overall efforts.
3. **The creation of an inter-agency working group** consisting of key members of operational agencies, and other action partners, chaired by the project manager and supported by the local research team. Such working groups generally have a stable core membership, supplemented as needed or over time with new additions. The membership usually includes the local project manager and research team; senior representatives from the local police department, the county sheriff’s office (if applicable), the district attorney’s office, the U.S. attorney’s office, probation and parole; and several representatives for social services and community moral actors. The working group should meet bi-monthly for several hours, with clear ground rules that require principals-only attendance and a closed-door, no-distractions working environment.
4. **Governance and Sustainability:** Following successful launch and implementation, as measured by the execution of several call-ins and initial reductions in violence, the working group should focus specifically on constructing a governance structure that will provide accountability for the overall effort, including the project manager, representatives of the city, law enforcement, social services and the community. The best management structure creates operational subcommittees for law enforcement, community moral engagement, social services and systems/ research/performance measurement. Senior representatives of these subcommittees then report to a “governing board” structure, including the mayor, police chief and other senior leaders. This governing board performs regular performance reviews, provides oversight and retains final decision-making authority over key decision points, political issues and high-level strategic guidance of the effort. There are models available for constructing such a governance structure, but each such structure will have to be adapted to local particulars.

What if we are doing all of these things already?

This is a common response by many when they first hear about this work. In many places, many or most of the core elements of the strategy are in fact already going on. There is law enforcement work; social-services prevention work; community non-violence activity and the like. **However, without being organized in the right way and without the key element of direct, sustained communication with violent groups, the same outcomes cannot be achieved.** Those existing activities are generally not

carefully organized, coordinated among all the parties, or strategically directed. Outside of the strategy, almost no jurisdiction has in place its key element: direct, coordinated, repeated contact with these violent groups.

What is the violence really about?

Despite popular sentiment to the contrary, violence is generally not the result of conflicts over money. Repeated reviews of violence in American cities have demonstrated that it is most often linked to a chaotic street culture that puts an extremely high premium on “respect” and on reacting to “disrespect” with violence. It occurs disproportionately in disadvantaged communities of color and is caused predominantly by a remarkably small and active number of people locked in group dynamics on the street. The internal dynamics of these groups and the rules of the street culture drive much of the violence between groups and individuals. Main ideas in the street culture include:

- Disrespect requires violence
- We’re not afraid of death or prison
- We handle our own business: a man doesn’t go to the police
- We’ve got each other’s back: the enemy of my friend is my enemy
- We’re justified in what we do: history, racism, oppression, and neglect make it OK.

Fortunately, experience has shown that this code can be directly challenged by people with respect and authenticity in the eyes of offenders. The group violence reduction strategy seeks to simultaneously challenge the street code, offer help for those who will take it, and ensure group accountability for violence. Its explicit aim is to reduce informal peer dynamics in the gang that promote violence by creating collective accountability, produce internal dynamics that deter violence, establish clear community norms against violence, and give gang members an “honorable exit” from committing violence.

How do you get people from other safer neighborhoods to care about this issue?

Our experience is that you cannot get them to care. Fortunately you don’t have to. The strength within the communities where the problem is the most severe suffices. More help would be welcome, but it is not necessary.

NATIONAL NETWORK STRATEGIES: **DRUG MARKET INTERVENTION (DMI) STRATEGY**

I. THE BASICS

What is the drug market intervention strategy?

The drug market intervention (DMI) strategy is a “sister” of the gang violence reduction strategy, designed to permanently eliminate overt drug markets. In many neighborhoods, when the core violence problem has been addressed, the next most serious public safety problems are associated with these drug markets. The collateral damage and unintended consequences of law enforcement, and some of the most important sources of tension between the community and the police, are also associated with these drug markets. The DMI strategy was first demonstrated in High Point, North Carolina, in 2004 and is often referred to as the “High Point Model.” Moving drug market by drug market in any particular jurisdiction, it identifies street-level dealers, arrests violent offenders, suspends cases for non-violent dealers, and brings together drug dealers, their families, law enforcement and criminal justice officials, service providers, and community leaders for a meeting that makes clear the dealing has to stop. It delivers a clear message that the community cares for the offenders but rejects their conduct, help is available, and renewed dealing will result in the activation of any existing cases. The strategy has been shown to almost completely eliminate this type of drug market with low levels of arrest and prosecution. It has also helped to keep people from being arrested and imprisoned, rebuild relationships between minority communities and law enforcement and redirect the lives of drug dealers.

What happens at the DMI call-in?

At the call-in, dealers are given three core messages. Community influentials tell them that the community needs and demands that drug dealings stop; social services representatives tell them that help is available and how to get it; law enforcement tells them that if they are known to return to dealing, existing cases against them will be immediately reactivated and they will be taken off the street. They will hear from all three parties that they are valued, that there are high expectations that they will succeed, and that their previous behavior is entirely unacceptable.

What’s the impact?

The DMI strategy was designed to eliminate particular overt drug markets, and the intervention largely appears to do that. The street market typically goes away at the time of the call-in and never returns in anything like its original form. Some level of maintenance is needed to sustain the new conditions. But usually this is minor and can be incorporated into routine community and law enforcement activities. The

strategy has produced reductions of up to 50-75% in recorded crime in many intervention areas.⁶ But the statistics do not capture the full picture. For community residents, the bottom line is that their neighborhood has been transformed.

Why does it work?

DMI employs several elements that contribute to its effectiveness: First, it focuses on entire markets. Traditional drug enforcement strategies tend to deal with a few dealers at a time or a few users at a time, while the market as a whole stays vigorous and draws offenders back in, continues to intimidate the community, and makes the authorities look weak and incompetent. The DMI strategy shuts down entire markets, interrupting those dynamics and making it far easier to maintain the victory. Second, DMI focuses attention only on active dealers in a given market – who prove to be far fewer than usually believed – demonstrating to communities that law enforcement can be careful, selective, and will not engage in practices like profiling. Enforcement powers are used strategically and sparingly, employing arrest and prosecution only against violent offenders and when nonviolent offenders have resisted all efforts to get them to desist and to provide them with help. Third, through the use of “banked” cases,⁷ the strategy makes the promise of law enforcement sanctions against dealers extremely direct and credible, so that dealers are in no doubt concerning the consequences of offending and have good reason to change their behavior. The strategy also brings powerful informal social control to bear on dealers, from immediate family and community figures. It organizes and focuses services, help, and support on dealers, so that those who are willing to try have what they need to change their lives. Each operation also includes a maintenance strategy designed to prevent the market from reemerging.

Finally, truth-telling and racial reconciliation is the strategy’s key element. Many in the affected communities genuinely believe that law enforcement is using drug laws and street crime as an excuse to oppress them. Many in law enforcement genuinely believe the community is corrupt and complicit in the

⁶ High Point’s West End, the first market to have been made subject to the approach, has been closed since the first drug market call-in in May 2004, and has seen a sustained reduction in violent crime of over 50%. Subsequent operations in High Point have eliminated all overt markets. In Providence, in the worst drug market in the city, calls for police service went down 58%, reported drug crime 70%, and drug calls to police 81%.⁶ In Hempstead, drug arrests in the target area averaged around 150 a year. Hempstead had its drug market call-in in January 2008; drug arrests fell 87% in 2008⁶ and continued to decline into single digits in 2009.⁶ A pre/post trend evaluation of a drug market intervention in Rockford, Illinois found a reduction in property, drug, and nuisance offenses of 22.2%, combined with strong evidence of diffusion of benefits to surrounding areas.⁶ A recent DMI in East Nashville, Tennessee, is currently being formally evaluated. Key findings include reductions in drug and narcotics offenses of 55.5%, drug equipment violations of 36.8%, and calls for service of 18.1%.⁶

⁷ A “banked” case refers to a potential prosecution for narcotics sales, supported by audio and video evidence obtained through a controlled buy that is held in an inactive status unless the subject of the prosecution continues dealing, at which point an arrest warrant is issued and prosecution proceeds.

drug trade and the related street violence. High levels of drug enforcement and indiscriminate policing do objective damage to the community by saturating whole generations with criminal records. Community anger at the police, and community silence about the dealing, leads drug dealers and gang members to believe that the community tolerates or supports their behavior. These are matters that can be explicitly raised and addressed. Doing so leads to a simple but profound consensus that violence must certainly stop, public drug dealing, at least, must also stop, that drug dealers deserve help, that a strong community stand against dealing is preferable to intrusive law enforcement, that arrest and prosecution should be minimized, and that, as a last resort, law enforcement should take action with full community support.

What happens to demand? Doesn't the market just go somewhere else?

The strategy is not about drugs or drug use. It is about the way particular drug markets function and about the drug markets that are the most corrosive and destructive in our most vulnerable communities. The strategy demonstrates it is possible to entirely, or almost entirely, eliminate the street corner sales, crack houses, drive-thru buyers, violence, and prostitution that tends to accompany those markets. We simply do not see the markets pop up somewhere else. Instead both field experience and evaluations have shown “diffusion of benefits,” meaning that drug markets and overall levels of street crime elsewhere in the affected jurisdiction actually improve somewhat. There is still drug selling and drug use in these communities. But the fundamental point is that this is an *overt drug market* strategy – not a drug strategy – and it is very effective at its core goal of returning public safety and public space to devastated neighborhoods.

II. RACIAL RECONCILIATION

Why is this strategy focused on minority communities?

It is not focused on minority communities. The work is focused on overt drug markets. As a matter of fact, virtually all overt drug markets are in minority communities. Those communities suffer the most from both the impact of the drug market and the impact of persistent and intrusive drug enforcement. The strategy is designed to address both of these harms.

What is racial reconciliation? Why does it matter in this context?

Truth-telling and racial reconciliation is a key element in both strategies, but it is particularly important in the drug market intervention because of the history and perceptions of drug enforcement in American cities. Many in the affected communities, which are essentially all communities of color and predominately African American, genuinely believe that law enforcement is using drug laws and street crime as an excuse to oppress them. Many in law enforcement genuinely believe everyone in the community is corrupt and complicit in the drug trade and the related street violence. High levels of drug enforcement and

indiscriminate policing do objective damage to the community by saturating whole generations with criminal records. When communities are furious with the police, they are not inclined to speak up publicly against their own about drugs and violence. This leads drug dealers and gang members to believe that their communities tolerate or even support their behavior. These are matters that can be explicitly raised and addressed.

Doing so leads to a simple but profound consensus that violence must stop, public drug dealing, at least, must also stop, that both communities and law enforcement would like to see current offenders move to legitimacy, that a strong community stand against violence and dealing is preferable to intrusive law enforcement, that arrest and prosecution should be minimized, and that, as a last resort, law enforcement should take action with full community support. By addressing the usually unacknowledged racial tension that permeates these issues, an opportunity is created for a fundamentally different relationship between community and law enforcement. Perhaps more than anything else, we have come to see how nobody involved likes the present situation: communities, offenders, and law enforcement alike are trapped, angry, and frustrated.

What is the source of tension between law enforcement and the community?

Many minority communities, where overt drug markets are almost exclusively found, have long collective memories of being treated badly by law enforcement. America's modern civil rights era is only about forty years old; before that, communities of color were in fact oppressed under color of law. Today many minority communities are policed in intrusive and unpleasant ways, in the eyes of their residents. This can be particularly true of drug market areas, where street stops, vehicle stops, warrant service on houses and apartments and the like are concentrated. Most people in those areas are not drug dealers, but they're often treated as if they were. Very high levels of arrest and incarceration often don't solve the drug market and violence problem, but do create unintended damage to communities as many, sometimes most, men end up with criminal records, which stay with them for life, and families are broken up by prison stays and other criminal justice system interventions.

Many in such communities think that law enforcement is simply using drug enforcement as an excuse to prey upon them, and even that law enforcement and the government is behind the drug trade. This is wrong – we know that – but as long as communities believe it the impact is toxic. For their part, law enforcement often reads community anger and withdrawal as tolerance and complicity. Because communities don't side with law enforcement and speak out against the drugs and violence, law enforcement thinks they don't care or that everyone is living off drug money. That's wrong too, but as long as law enforcement believes it, it's toxic too. Addressing these misunderstandings and unintended consequences is central to the drug market strategy.

III. MISCONCEPTIONS

Why not just arrest everyone? Isn't this "hug-a-thug?"

No it is not. One reason to "bank" the case is so that drug dealers know, ahead of time, for a fact, that the next time they're known to be dealing there will be immediate legal consequences. The aim is deterrence, not enforcement, and it's very effective. Another is to make it crystal clear to the community that any notion it might have that the goal of law enforcement is jailing its young men is wrong. When law enforcement changes what it's doing in this way, it frees communities to speak out very clearly against the drug dealing and violence. When communities do that, drug dealers listen.

Isn't this like the episode of *The Wire* where they let the dealers operate, as long as they stay off to one side?

No, absolutely not. The strategy is not about making a deal with drug dealers. It is not an admission of defeat by law enforcement. Instead it creates a very powerful, very public community consensus against overt drug activity; it identifies and arrests high level and violent dealers; it offers non-violent dealers a way to change their lives; and it creates rock-solid legal consequences for those who decide to continue. The strategy utilizes "banked" cases⁸ to make the promise of law enforcement sanctions against dealers extremely direct and credible so that dealers are in no doubt concerning the consequences of offending and have good reason to change their behavior.

Isn't this soft on crime?

No. Higher-level dealers and violent offenders go to prison. Routine law enforcement simply doesn't work for low-level dealers. Hard or soft doesn't matter; doing what we know full well won't work is just foolish.

What about gangs in the drug market context?

There has been group involvement in some of the drug markets shut down using this approach, but it did not make any difference as a practical matter. Often there has been concern that gang leadership will somehow fight back or coerce gang members to continue dealing. We have never seen this happen in practice.

⁸ A "banked" case refers to a potential prosecution for narcotics sales, supported by audio and video evidence obtained through a controlled buy that is held in an inactive status unless the subject of the prosecution continues dealing, at which point an arrest warrant is issued and prosecution proceeds.

What about kingpins?

The strategy is not about kingpins. You do not find high level drug dealers operating at the street level where this strategy takes effect.

Drug dealers make lots of money. Why would they stop?

The dealers we are talking about here do not make lots of money. Most are barely getting by. There is good research showing that most of them would be better off in minimum wage jobs. The idea that there is lots of money to be made in dealing drugs on the street is simply a misconception, which has led many to believe that people would have to be offered very high level jobs or profound reasons not to return to the street corners. This is simply not the reality of the situation.⁹

I am in law enforcement. Drug dealers don't care about going to jail. Why would this work?

Drug dealers frequently act as though they do not care about going to jail. But that is usually their response *after* they have been arrested. When it is too late about going to jail, bravado prevails. This strategy gives them notice *ahead of time* that jail will be a near certainty: that's one of the main points of "banking" the cases. It turns out that, in this situation, dealers very much do not want to go to jail and most change their behavior as a result.

The police are behind the drugs. Why would they give people a second chance?

Many people in communities plagued by overt drug markets genuinely believe, for example, that the CIA is behind crack and that drug laws are simply a new way for the police and white people to continue their historic oppression of blacks (and other minorities). We in the National Network have worked with law enforcement for decades and know that this is not true. The drug war and its impact on communities is a train wreck, not a conspiracy. Many in law enforcement are sick of not being effective, of being alienated from communities they are trying to protect, and understand that ceaseless heavy enforcement is not good for those communities. They are willing to try something new.

⁹ Levitt, S.D. & Venkatesh, S.A. (2000). "An Economic Analysis of a Drug-Selling Gang's Finances." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. XX, 755-789. Due to the sensitive nature of the data, there was no location given for the city in which this drug gang operated.

Reuter, P., MacCoun, R., & Murphy, P. (1990). *Money from Crime: A Study of the Economics of Drug Dealing in Washington, D.C.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND-Drug Policy Research Center.

Hagedorn, J.M. (1994). "Homeboys, Dope Fiends, Legits and New Jacks." *Criminology*, 32, (2), 197-219. &

Hagedorn, J.M. (1998). "The Business of Drug Dealing in Milwaukee." *Wisconsin Policy Research Institute Report*, Vol. 11, (5).

The community doesn't care about the dealing. They are all living off drug money.

Many people in law enforcement genuinely believe that communities plagued by overt drug markets tolerate or even like, and are profiting from, drug dealing and don't care about the violence and chaos. They don't understand that community exhaustion and anger, not complicity, are behind the silence. In fact, the overwhelming majority of people in hard-hit communities are doing the right thing. They hate the violence and disorder and understand that the drug markets are toxic. But they no longer expect the police to help, they may think the police are behind the drugs, and they have not been offered any way to help except through jailing their own people. With the truth telling and new ways of doing business that the drug market strategy brings, these community members are also willing to try something new.

How can we solve this problem without addressing education and poverty?

Part of the strength of the approach is that it mobilizes public safety and antiviolence sentiment that is extremely strong even in the most troubled communities. In the poorest and most neglected communities around the nation, the majority of young men are not involved in drug dealing. It simply turns out that it is not necessary to fix all these institutions to interrupt a street market and make the area safer as a result. At the same time it is impossible to promote economic development and institutions such as schools and hospitals when open-air drug markets dominate an area. Thus the core purpose of our work is to create the kind of conditions within communities that are needed to do the more important longer term work. Public safety is our starting point.

IV. GETTING STARTED

How do you get started?

Thoroughly explore the National Network for Safe Communities' website, www.nnscommunities.org, which offers a wealth of information, including basic overviews of the strategies, implementation guides, media coverage, formal evaluations, case studies, information on upcoming events, training opportunities etc. The National Network hosts an occasional webinar series that can help jurisdictions interested in implementing one or both of the strategies get started and address particular areas of interest. Check the website regularly for more information or contact infonnscc@jjay.cuny.edu with specific inquiries.

Who are the essential players or stakeholders?

Fundamentally, four groups need to be involved: the affected community, social service providers, law enforcement and "influentials"—those close to the dealer, such as a mother, father, grandparent, minister, or the like, who will help steer him or her right after the Call-In. The law enforcement group typically includes the police department, local district attorney, United States attorney, probation, parole, federal enforcement agencies (DEA, FBI, ATF), and sheriff. The social services group includes agencies able to

provide education, job training and placement, life skills, counseling, mentoring, housing, emergency assistance, substance abuse treatment and the like. The community group includes ex-offenders, gang outreach workers, faith representatives, local elders and other influentials. "Influentials" can be found, in practice, by looking at offenders' prior probation and parole records, jail and prison visit lists, making home visits, or simply asking the dealer at the right time.

What resources are necessary?

Most jurisdictions do not require new funding. Our presumption is that implementation of the strategy will be resource-neutral in any particular place. In practice, the community capacity to set strong new standards against public drug dealing does not require new funding. It simply requires finding and working with people eager to express those standards, and every community is full of such people. Social services are available, but not well organized for this particular population and can be coordinated in a way that is far more effective. Law enforcement has the capacity to do the necessary enforcement when required. Rather than additional resources, doing this work requires understanding the logic of the strategy and a sustained local commitment to creating it and keeping it in place.

How can you get judges on board? What is their role?

Judges have a very particular and appropriate role which properly prohibits them from committing to a strategy like this. It is not acceptable for judges to say these cases will be treated differently when they come before the court. It is not possible or appropriate to lobby judges. In practice, the difference is made on the law enforcement side by raising the caliber of the investigative and the prosecutorial work – not by altering judges' behavior.

How should you organize the community?

It is our invariable experience that communities do care about overt markets and the kind of intense community harms that accompany them. They may be traumatized; they may see no productive action to take; and they may be so angry at law enforcement that they do not speak out. But they do care. In practice, it is often necessary to facilitate a truth telling and reconciliation between law enforcement and affected communities where community harms and grievances are acknowledged by law enforcement and where communities are able to acknowledge their responsibility for setting and enforcing community norms and standards. Once this conversation happens, affected communities usually become much more willing to articulate anti-dealing norms, in part because they are less angry with law enforcement and are willing to try a new direction. Each community has people willing to set these community standards and they are usually fairly easy to find. Working with them, at least at the outset, is all you need to develop and implement the strategy and to make it effective. Part of the reason that many strategies do not work is because they rely on impossibly high goals such as “organizing the community.”

How should you organize social services?

Sufficient social services are almost always available for the purposes of the drug market intervention strategy, especially because the number of dealers driving any particular market usually turns out to be quite small. Even in the most intense market, the number of dealers rarely exceeds 30 or 40 individuals in total. The available services are also generally not well organized for this particular population and can be coordinated in a way that is far more effective. There usually needs to be one access point available to DMI participants; this access point should have one phone number to call that will be answered; and dealers who call that number should get help immediately. It is also critical that social service providers, and their partners in law enforcement and the community, not promise the dealers employment.

Though DMI participants have tended to fare better in the labor market than group/gang members associated with the group violence strategy (in part because their criminal records tend to be less extensive or serious), a job promise can't always be delivered and depends on local economic and other factors. The community has a moral right to demand that public drug dealing stops—period. Independent of that, the partnership would also like to help the dealers improve their lives. The social service promise is simply “we want to help you and we will do the best we can.” Both the High Point Community Against Violence (HPCAV) and the Hempstead Council on Thought and Action (COTA) organizations have done innovative work in this area, and both evolved out of DMI operations in those communities. More information on HPCAV and COTA is available on the National Network website.

How do you identify those selected for the banked case rather than immediate arrest?

This decision is made by local law enforcement, often in consultation with representatives of the affected community. While the criteria differ from place to place, many jurisdictions are willing to give a second chance to dealers as long as they do not have histories of violence and are not engaged in major trafficking.

How do you get dealers “into the room?”

The DMI strategy functions slightly differently than the group violence strategy. Essentially, DMI relies heavily on the use of “influentials,” in other words, friends and family members who are close to and respected by the dealers. Typically a team consisting of a law enforcement officer, a social service provider, and a community member makes a home visit on the dealer and his or her influential and makes a face-to-face invitation to attend the Call-In. A respectful letter of invitation, signed by a senior law enforcement official, informs the dealers that they will not be arrested at the Call-In and that they are welcome to bring with them somebody important to them. Repeated visits, and reminders, are often necessary. In practice, the majority of dealers notified in this manner will attend the call-in.

What is the role of ex-offenders in this?

Offenders and potential offenders are influenced the most strongly by people who they respect and perceive as authentic. Communities that suffer from overt drug markets are typically home to large numbers of convicted or formerly incarcerated people who have learned their own lessons about drugs, crime and violence and no longer wish to act in this way. They frequently feel a very powerful desire to give back to the community and have tremendous standing in eyes of younger offenders. Working with them in the call-ins, in street outreach or in diversion programs can be extraordinarily powerful. Therefore, ex-offenders are among the strongest allies we have in delivering an anti-dealing message.

What happens to the dealers who get the “banked case?” Are they successful? If they get arrested, that is a failure, right?

The experience to date has been mixed. Some dealers succeed, some fail. In some jurisdictions, most dealers have not moved into legitimate work, have returned to dealing and been arrested; in others nearly all have done very well. We continue to focus on how to help dealers succeed. However, while we would prefer that all the dealers successfully transition out of the street, the primary definition of success is the transformation of the community—as measured by the dramatic improvements in safety and quality of life of the community that was poisoned by the overt drug market. The difficult truth is that all of the dealers who attend the call-in (usually between 10-30 individuals) can fail and can be sent to jail or prison, yet the drug market can remain closed and the thousands of people who live in the neighborhood can reclaim their public spaces, their children can play outside and feel safe when walking to school, and the community can engage in the more important work of community building.

How do you sustain it? Won't the market re-emerge eventually?

The strategy was designed to eliminate particular overt drug markets, and the intervention largely appears to do that. The street market typically goes away at the time of the call-in and never returns in anything like its original form. Some level of maintenance is needed to sustain new conditions. But usually this is minor and can be incorporated into routine community activities. Once the market has been “turned off” even for a short period of time, it is much easier to prevent it from re-emerging than to try to suppress it when it was operating at full strength. A typical maintenance strategy includes prioritizing residents’ calls to the police regarding drug dealing in the area and maintaining close communication between neighborhood residents and police. Such strategies can also include physical improvements to the market area and community events demonstrating support for the new neighborhood conditions

What if you are in a really big city? What if you are in a small city?

This approach simply goes market by market and shuts them down. Some cities have a lot, some have a few. But at the level of the individual market, the strategy works and doesn't change very much from place to place.

Why not just arrest everybody who deals drugs?

Well, how's that been working for you? All other issues aside, if arresting dealers solved the problem, we wouldn't be having this conversation. It doesn't.

ⁱ For nearly fifteen years, scores of jurisdictions across the country have been implementing two effective **strategies** to reduce violence and eliminate drug markets. The strategy for preventing gang violence, first developed in Boston, MA, has been successfully applied in cities as diverse as Chicago, IL, Cincinnati, OH, and Stockton, CA. The strategy for eliminating overt community drug markets, first developed in High Point, NC, has been successfully applied in cities as diverse as Providence, RI, Hempstead, NY, and Nashville, TN. There is now a substantial body of **research and field experience** documenting that these strategies are associated with large reductions in violent and drug crime. The National Network for Safe Communities believes that these successful innovations mean that America can deal with its crime problems in a fundamentally different way. The Network will bring together the jurisdictions around the country that are currently implementing either the gang violence or the drug market strategy, or both; help them learn from one another; help them address common issues; provide a supportive community of practice for new jurisdictions; and work to make these strategies standard practice across the United States.

ⁱⁱ A summary of this research is available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1326932>.

ⁱⁱⁱ See David Kennedy and Anthony A. Braga (1998) "Homicide in Minneapolis: Research for Problem Solving," *Homicide Studies*, 2 (3): 263–90; Stewart Wakeling (2003) "Ending Gang Homicide: Deterrence Can Work," *Perspectives on Violence Prevention*, California Attorney General's Office, California Health and Human Services Agency, No. 1, February; Erin Dalton (2003) "Lessons in Preventing Homicide," *Project Safe Neighborhoods Report*, Michigan State University, December, pp. 1–60; Anthony A. Braga, David M. Kennedy, and George E. Tita (2002) "New Approaches to the Strategic Prevention of Gang and Group-Involved Violence," in C. Ronald Huff (ed.), *Gangs in America III*, Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, pp. 271–86; Jack McDevitt, Scott H. Decker, Natalie Kroovand Hipple, and Edmund McGarrell, with John Klofas and Tim Bynum (2006) "Offender Notifications: Case Study 2" *Project Safe Neighborhoods: Strategic Interventions*, US Department of Justice, May; Desmond Enrique Arias (2004) "Faith in Our Neighbors: Networks and Social Order in Three Brazilian Favelas," *Latin American Politics and Society*, 46 (1): 1–38; Claudio Estadio de Caso Beato (2005) "Fica Vivo" *Proyecto para el Control de Homicidios en Belo Horizonte*, Washington, DC: The World Bank; Andrew Downie (2000) "Taking Boston's Lead, Police in Rio Lighten Up," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 8