

Promising Practices

Community Violence Intervention Programs

Across the country, community violence intervention (CVI) programs have demonstrated success in reducing violent crime by addressing violence through a variety of non-traditional methods. The Biden Administration has recognized the value in this approach by [announcing significant investments](#) in efforts to reduce violence, specifically, gun-based violence.

Many of these programs employ a public health and behavior change model, interrupting the cycle of violence through education and targeted outreach. Others incorporate data analysis and “hot spot” technology to identify problem areas in which to focus community-level interventions.

In this promising practices brief, we highlight two programs that have shown positive outcomes in addressing community violence. Typically, these programs identify and treat the highest-risk individuals, detect and interrupt conflicts and work on an interpersonal level to change social norms.

SNUG — New York



New York State’s [SNUG Neighborhood Violence Prevention Program](#) grew from one site in 2009 to 12 sites statewide by 2020. Byrne JAG funds supported this expansion in part by funding a statewide SNUG program coordinator and a statewide training director.

SNUG — “guns” spelled backwards — is modeled on [Cure Violence](#), which employs a public health approach to stopping violence. Cure Violence began in Chicago in 2000 and has since been replicated or inspired new initiatives across the county and internationally. In addition to the SNUG program, there are 18 Cure Violence sites across the five boroughs in New York City.

SNUG is guided by an understanding that violence is a public health issue and that community partners and strategic partnerships can create change. It approaches gun violence using the disease model; identifying hot spots and infectors and working with those at the epicenter of violence to redirect

them into more productive lifestyles and to reject retaliation.

The initiative employs outreach workers who live in the communities they serve and have experienced violence themselves firsthand, giving them insight and credibility. SNUG staff help identify areas and individuals or groups at a high risk of committing and experiencing violence and provide mentorship and leadership to break the cycle of violence.

SNUG Outreach Workers:

- Help to prevent and defuse incidents of violence and potential incidents of violence.
- Provide participants with conflict resolution skills.
- Provide case management services and link clients to collaborating agencies.
- Help to promote self-sufficiency.

Outreach workers also have emergency room access at local hospitals and are called in to

mediate confrontations and de-escalate potential retaliations after a shooting occurs. Trinity Alliance, which houses two SNUG sites, reported a total of 226 mediations in 2019, including cases with those at the highest risk of continued violence. The New York State government has expressed continued support of the SNUG program, [announcing another \\$3.1 million in funding in December 2020](#).



A SNUG case manager speaks to the community following a shooting in Poughkeepsie, NY.

(Patrick Oehler/Poughkeepsie Journal)

Place Network Investigations (PNI) — Cincinnati, Ohio



The Place Network Investigations (PNI) model is a violence reduction approach being explored in Cincinnati, Ohio. Based on earlier work conducted in [Las Vegas](#), PNI operates under the belief that people who commit crime, victims of crime and the places where crime occur are connected and concentrated within relatively small areas. As an expansion of “hot spot” or “targeted” law enforcement approaches, PNI works to recognize interconnected places where crime, particularly violent crime is found, known as **crime place networks**. Once identified, a broad coalition is formed to disrupt the different types of places involved in crime and the different people who commit or enable crime through thoughtful enforcement.

These networks consist of four kinds of spaces.

- Crime Sites—where crime occurs
- Convergent Settings—public places where people who commit crime meet
- Comfort Spaces—private places such as apartments when staging and supplying occurs
- Corrupting Spots—places that encourage criminal activity in other locations.

In one example, the [Cincinnati Police Department](#) identified a relatively small area in the city where a gang-run, open-air drug market was operating. That area was home to 14 percent of all serious crime, 26 percent of the city’s serious violent crime and 43 percent of all shooting victims. The drug market was disrupted, and arrests were made but

the crime place network remained in place and activity resumed. Investigators have since begun using PNI to better understand the connection between the places and people involved in crime to reduce crime and violence in the area.

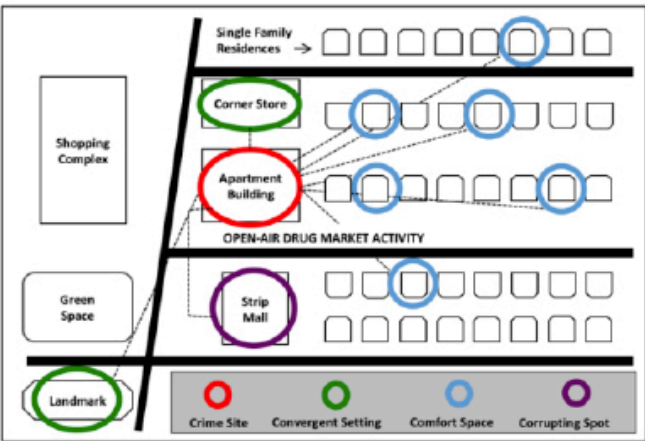
Using PNI, they identified the drug market (crime site), a corner store where people committing crimes would often meet (convergent setting), several nearby apartments (comfort spaces) and nearby businesses suspected of accepting stolen goods and laundering money (corrupting spots).

Once crime place networks are identified, the PNI approach calls for a city-wide effort to address the activity, including possible zoning changes, enhanced parking enforcement and neighborhood clean-ups, in addition to targeted law enforcement and prosecution. The model also relies on educating and empowering law-abiding residents to reassert themselves in their communities.

In Cincinnati, the effort resulted in a drastic, and lasting, reduction in violent crime in the area.

PNI is a model for which [Byrne JAG awards](#) would be useful in piloting or expanding the work in a large number of locations.

Example of a Place Network Investigation crime map



Crime place network supporting a chronic violent hotspot

CRIME PLACE NETWORKS

Crime place networks can include four types of places:

- **Crime sites** – specific high-crime places that facilitate offender and victim/target interactions
- **Convergent settings** – public places routinely used by offenders
- **Comfort spaces** – private places controlled by offenders and their associates
- **Corrupting spots** – businesses that support criminal activity in other locations

Source: International Association of Chiefs of Police

Do you have a Promising Practice from your jurisdiction you want to share?

Contact us at strategicplanning@ncja.org !