



City of Dallas

Focused Deterrence Crime Reduction Plan

**Public Safety Committee
November 14, 2022**

Lonzo Anderson, Assistant Chief,
Dallas Police Department
City of Dallas

Presentation Overview



- What is Focused Deterrence
- Necessary Components
- Implementation Strategies
- V.I.P.E.R. Program
- Focused Deterrence Summary
- Focused Deterrence- Next Steps



Focused Deterrence Overview



- Targets violence undertaken by repeat chronic offenders who are susceptible to Criminal Justice sanctions.
- Goal is to **change behavior** (i.e., reduce violence) by intervening with a targeted, collaborative strategy supported by law enforcement agencies and community partners.
- The Department's model relies on **strong cooperation** between **criminal justice agencies**, **social service organizations**, and **community members** who engage **directly** with violent offenders to clearly communicate **credible moral** and law enforcement **messages against violence**, offer genuine substantive assistance, and launch strategic enforcement campaigns against those who continue their violent behavior.



Focused Deterrence Overview



- Employs a **problem-oriented approach** to stopping the violence.
- Forming an **interagency enforcement group**, which often includes local police, probation, parole, state and federal prosecutors, and federal law enforcement agencies.
- Conducting **research** to identify **high-risk offenders** and the **context or places** of their criminal behavior.
- **Matching enforcement actions with parallel efforts** to direct **social services** and the **moral voices of communities** negatively affected by the targeted criminal behavior to those key offenders or groups of offenders.
- **Communicating** directly and repeatedly with targeted offenders to inform them of the **heightened scrutiny** they are being subjected to based on their criminal behavior. They are made aware that increased **enforcement** and **sanctions** will follow, and what they can do to **avoid** increased **attention**. This message can be disseminated during a “forum,” “offender notification meeting,” or “call-in” session(s) in which offenders are **invited** or **directed** (based on probation or parole status) to attend these face-to-face meetings with law enforcement, social service providers, and representatives from the community.



Necessary Components



- **Criminal Justice Agencies:**
 - Local (i.e., DPD, County), state (TXDPS), federal law enforcement (FBI, ATF, DEA, HSI, etc.)
 - Prosecutors – local & federal
 - Probation & parole (or other correctional agencies)
- **Role:** Provide a clear and consistent message of deterrence and alternative opportunities, supported by legal actions (i.e., arrest)



Necessary Components



- **Community/Social:**
 - Services:
 - Education institutions, Job training, Housing, Psychological services, including risk assessment and cognitive behavior-based options, Employment (business leaders; employment opportunities), & Mentorship/life coaching.
 - Faith-based community support (e.g., pastors, religious leaders, etc.)
 - Family members: part of the 'moral voice' to reinforce the message.
 - Victims of crime.
 - Local government (OIPSS); Other relevant city offices/departments.
 - Street outreach workers (i.e. violence interrupters) can help make contact with offenders, provide encouragement/support, connection to services.
- **Role:** Provide a clear and consistent message of deterrence and alternative opportunities, supported by legal actions (i.e., arrest)



Necessary Components



- **Critical Positions (Board)**
 - **External Champion** - outreach to elected officials & policy-makers; recruit participants and generate passion/excitement; “face of the project” with media and potential donors.
 - **Project Director** – coordinates all focused deterrence components; directs resources, ensures accountability of all subgroups and teams to established goals and metrics.
 - **Law Enforcement Project Manager** - coordination of all law enforcement activities (should be a high rank).
 - **Community Project Manager** - manages the daily activities of participating agencies/groups.



Necessary Components - Structure



Organizational Structure



Implementation Strategies



- **Phase 1 – Problem identification and Analysis.**

- A. Person based strategy** – problem assessment to identify:

- **Prior victimization** of the **victims** and **perpetrators** (e.g. previous gunshot wound).
 - **Gang**/group dynamics in the area (conflicts and the alliances).
 - Identify the **highest-risk individuals** to contact based on these or other criteria.
 - Selection of **appropriate unit of analysis** for measuring implementation and assessing impact: individuals, areas (police divisions, block groups), groups/gangs, etc.
 - **Define success metrics** (e.g. reduction in violent crime; reduction in shootings; reduction in violent victimization/persons wounded; metrics tied to unit(s) of analysis)



Implementation Strategies



- **Phase 2 – Communicating the Message - Direct and honest communication** is critical:
 - **Call-in sessions** with those on probation or parole.
 - **Targeted notifications** to those not under criminal justice oversight (i.e., not on probation or parole).
 - **Visits to correctional facilities** to target those who are nearing release to the community.
 - **Take-away letters** spelling out the initiative, possible sanctions by law enforcement, and available services.
 - **Support by community/social services:** employment, education, mental health services, substance abuse, cognitive behavior therapy, etc.
- **Phase 3: Enforcement/Community Services Engagement.**
 - Law enforcement – **follow-through actions** based on violence after the message has been communicated.
 - Community services – **ongoing outreach by the community groups** to support and facilitate positive life choices by those who accept services.
 - **On-going data collection** by community groups **to document (facilitated by UTSA research partner):**
 - **Contacts** with all targeted and associated individuals.
 - **Adoption of services** by targeted and associated individuals.
 - **Arrests/prosecutions/convictions** of targeted and associated individuals.



Throughout the Process



- Regular meetings and data analysis – law enforcement (UTSA assists as needed).
- Shooting reviews – law enforcement.
- Bi-weekly coordination meetings – law enforcement and community groups.
- Monthly performance evaluation assessment and meetings – law enforcement and community groups.
- Monthly data reporting to UTSA research partner.



Focused Deterrence- V.I.P.E.R. Program



- As part of Focused Deterrence, the V.I.P.E.R. Program, or “**Violent Individuals Prevention, Enforcement, & Rehabilitation.**”
- **Program Overview:**
 - Formulated to **reduce violent crime** by appropriately **identifying** and **addressing** the most **high-risk prolific offenders**. The methodology to identify these offenders utilizes **evidence-based, objective, and unbiased data metrics**.
 - The V.I.P.E.R. program follows the **methodology** provided by **Dr. Bryanna Fox** of the University of Florida (Department of Criminology). The UTSA researchers have also contacted Dr. Fox regarding the methodology utilized to develop the program.
 - The goal is to contribute to a **decrease** in the number of **victims** and **gun crimes** by identifying & deterring violent offenders **before** crimes are committed.



Focused Deterrence- V.I.P.E.R. Program



- The V.I.P.E.R. Program attempts to reduce recidivism in violent offenders using a **two-pronged strategy**:
 1. Connecting chronic violent offenders with **critical social service resources** being offered by community partners and organizations (**such as the Oasis Center**) to enable them to succeed in life and reduce their chance of reoffending.
 2. Securing the most **appropriate level of judicial sanctions**. Through an agreement with the **Dallas County District Attorney's Office**, who has agreed to **coordinate prosecutorial efforts** with the **United States Attorney's Office**, the **most senior-level prosecutors and investigators** from their most specialized divisions **will prosecute** all cases involving the **highest tier of individuals** identified by the V.I.P.E.R. Program.
- **Identified offenders** will be **notified** of **critical social services** being **offered** by the Dallas Police Department and Dallas County Criminal District Attorney's Office (DCCDAO) to assist those seeking to change their behavior through education, training, employment, mental health, substance abuse treatment, or other rehabilitative programs.
- Offenders will further be advised that **continued criminal activity** will **result** in **vigorous prosecutorial efforts** and the **most appropriate criminal penalties** will be **dispensed**.



Focused Deterrence- V.I.P.E.R. Program



- To determine a violent **offender's eligibility** for the program, a list of all offenders who have committed **two or more violent or violent-related offenses** within the city's jurisdiction **in the past two-years** is obtained.
- From the two-year list, each offender is given a **numerical score based upon their criminal history and prior affiliations** (ex: Gang). A list of **(7) criteria** has been established and assigned a specific numerical weight to determine an offender's over-all ranking and path in the program. The criteria are:
 1. Documented **Gang member** in the past 5-year period.
 2. Arrested and known to be involved in an **offense w/a firearm** or to have **possessed a firearm**. No date restriction.
 3. Arrested for a **prior violent offense** against another individual. Forcible felonies not including burglaries. No date restriction.
 4. Individual was a **shooter** in an offense. No date restriction.
 5. Adult **felony Probation** or **Parole**, or **release** from **prison**, in the past 3-year period after discharge date.
 6. **Arrested** for a **felony offense** within the past 2-years (not including an arrest which was counted in a previous category), **excluding** felony marijuana cases, and/or THC cases).
 7. **At Large Filing of a felony** for which the subject has not yet been arrested. Included past 2-year period.



Focused Deterrence- Summary



- Two primary components within the Focused Deterrence model:
 - Law enforcement: **communicate** the **expectations** of future behavior and the consequences of non-compliance. Ensure strategies in place for follow through.
 - Community engagement: **present** and **offer clear** and **realistic options** to discontinue the violence.
- Critical to this approach with respect and dignity:
 - A **clear** and **direct message** of what behaviors will no longer be acceptable AND
 - **What will happen** if those behaviors continue.
- Goal is to have offenders “**buy-in**” to the program and voluntarily comply, resulting in violence reduction.



Concluding Thoughts



- **Keys to success**
 - Unbiased data metrics
 - Information sharing
 - Cooperation/collaboration
 - Adherence to the plan
 - Rigorous and relentless evaluation
 - Commitment for the long term



Focused Deterrence- Next Steps



- **Identify key project leaders**
 - Project champion
 - Project director
 - Law enforcement manager
 - Social service manager
- **Secure cooperation from stakeholders**
 - City officials, service providers, community leaders
- **Develop multiagency task force**
 - Director/managers, DPD, federal LE, prosecutors, service provider reps, community voices/leaders
- **Build the list of targeted individuals and gangs/groups through extensive data analysis**
 - DPD, federal partners
- **Establish timeline**
 - Call-ins and custom notifications





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