

What is GunStat?

Research has demonstrated that a small number of offenders account for a disproportionate percentage of violent crimes, and these chronic offenders often share similar high-risk behaviors—including the possession and use of illegal firearms.¹ However, despite their small number, these offenders often perpetuate cycles of violence that leave a path of fear and devastation in communities. Strategies that identify and disrupt gun offenders have proven to be effective in reducing violence.

GunStat is a data-driven management strategy that focuses on reducing violent crime through the targeted identification, prosecution, and post-conviction monitoring of gun offenders. The strategy involves collaboration among law enforcement, prosecutors, federal law enforcement agencies, and other criminal justice stakeholders to systematically track gun cases and gun offenders through the criminal justice system. The process uses collective benchmarks that promote communication and data sharing across agencies to help address and prevent patterns of violent crime.

History of GunStat

The GunStat model was developed in Baltimore, Maryland, in the mid-2000s as part of the city's efforts to address and prevent street violence. At that time, Baltimore was experiencing a surge in violent gun crime, and information on offenders was isolated within specific criminal justice agencies. This resulted in strategies to prevent and disrupt gun violence becoming fragmented. In response, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice began facilitating a bi-weekly interagency meeting called GunStat, which used data to identify and track violent gun offenders. The model promoted structured collaboration, communication, and data sharing across agencies. Through the implementation of the GunStat model, Baltimore experienced substantial decreases in violent crime while also observing an overall reduction in both arrest rates and declinations to prosecute in gun-related cases.

Core Elements

Since its inception, GunStat has become a best practice model for collaborative approaches to addressing violent crime. It has been replicated in several cities, some of which include Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Wilmington, Delaware. While there have been variations in how the GunStat model has been applied, three core elements are implemented consistently:

- **The identification, targeted prosecution, and post-conviction monitoring of prolific gun offenders.**
- **Data and intelligence sharing across GunStat agencies.**
- **Recurring and regularly scheduled collaborative GunStat meetings to discuss and analyze data on gun offenders and gun cases.**

Through the implementation of these core elements, the GunStat model can promote enhanced communication and collaboration between criminal justice agencies to systematically address and prevent violent crime.

A key component of the GunStat model is the collective agreement to share information and intelligence across agencies. In most jurisdictions, critical data on gun offenders and gun cases is compartmentalized and segmented within different agencies. Technology limitations and the pressures of local politics often create obstacles and challenges to sharing information between criminal justice partners. The GunStat model provides a process for sharing data systematically, discussing challenges collaboratively, and leveraging existing resources to disrupt gun offenders. The process involves readily collecting and distributing data between agencies, analyzing trends in gun cases, and regularly meeting to review cases and discuss challenges.

GunStat Coordinator

Jurisdictions interested in implementing the GunStat model should consider identifying a coordinator to oversee the process. The GunStat coordinator plays a vital role by working across all criminal justice agencies to streamline the flow of information while also managing GunStat agendas, meetings, and post-meeting action items. Several cities have found that the process is more effective when the GunStat coordinator is positioned in a neutral agency. A neutral GunStat coordinator can help provide a more impartial review of the data and may also alleviate inter-agency tensions that traditionally exist between criminal justice agencies.

In Washington, D.C., the GunStat model is used to identify and monitor the justice system involvement of individuals at high risk of engaging in gun violence.² The process is managed and facilitated by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). The CJCC also uses an independent researcher to help analyze information and data. In Baltimore and Chicago, GunStat is coordinated by a director-level position within the mayor's office.

Typical Agencies to Include in GunStat

Agency Type	Recommended Agencies
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor’s Office: Agency or department focused on criminal justice policy • Mayor’s Office: Agency or department focused on criminal justice policy
Law Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City/County Police Department or Sheriff’s Office • State Police • Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) • Representatives from Federal Task Force Teams
Prosecution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Prosecutor’s Office • United States Attorney’s Office
Community Service Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile Services • Parole and Probation • Pretrial Services • Victim Advocates
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Research Partner • Health Department • Community Prevention and Intervention Programs