Crime Gun Intelligence Center Sites

Milwaukee, WI; Washington, DC; and Los Angeles, CA

Introduction

Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGIC) are an interagency collaboration focused on the immediate collection, management, and analysis of crime gun evidence, such as cartridge casings, in real time, to identify shooters, disrupt criminal activity, and to prevent future violence. CGICs rely on an ongoing collaboration between the ATF, local police department, crime laboratory, probation and parole, prosecuting attorneys, U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO), crime analysts, community groups, and academic organizations.

Through its National Resource and Technical Assistance Center (NRTAC) for Improving Law Enforcement Investigations, the National Police Foundation (NPF) is providing training and technical assistance to jurisdictions participating in the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Local Crime Gun Intelligence Center Initiative. These sites promote interagency collaboration focused on the immediate collection, management, and analysis of crime gun evidence across local, state, and federal partners. The primary outcome of CGIC sites is the identification of armed violent offenders for investigation and prosecution. Other outcomes include: identifying crime gun source, efficiently allocating resources, providing decision-makers with the most accurate crime data available, increasing case closure rates, advancing public safety, and preventing gun crime.

In October of 2016, the first three of nineteen BJA funded CGIC sites: Los Angeles, CA; Milwaukee, WI; and Washington, DC, received approximately $ 1 million each in grant funding from BJA. The sites took various approaches to CGIC implementation and received tailored training and technical assistance to ensure sustainability beyond their grant funding, which concluded in September of 2019. Below is a summary of the successes and outcomes of these three sites.

Fiscal Year 2016 - 2019 Grant Period CGIC Sites

Milwaukee, WI

The City of Milwaukee has historically been afflicted with high levels of firearm violence, fed by a steady source of firearms from commercial retailers, gun shows, stolen firearms, and internet-based selling platforms. Milwaukee suffered a 42% increase in total violent crime between 2011 and 2015 and, as of 2016, had the second highest violent crime rate per 100,000 U.S. residents.

To reduce gun violence in the city, the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) collaborated with ATF in the fall of 2014 to create a Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) within its Intelligence Fusion Center (IFC). Through the grant funding awarded in 2016 MPD was able to increase the capacity of the CGIC. MPD was able to hire an additional NIBIN technician and procure supplies and equipment to support comprehensive collection of ballistic material. This also included the construction of a new shoot room to test fire crime guns in the same building as the NIBIN laboratory and Forensics Section, which expedited the processing of firearms. Prior to this implementation, entry into NIBIN was often delayed due to the shoot room being housed in a different location. The funding also provided an increase in training on the importance of NIBIN to both detectives and prosecutors. In addition, the Milwaukee CGIC implemented what are now considered to be two best practices among other CGIC replication sites: a color-coded case prioritization system, as well as a data management and tracking system for NIBIN-related cases. NIBIN cases are classified by color based on prioritization and case assignment. This allows the CGIC leadership to utilize a simple system to prioritize the investigation of cases with the most viable of leads. To expand upon the success of the case classification system, the custom-built case management system allowed the tracking of cases from the inception of the NIBIN lead, through the course of the investigation, and finally sentencing and conviction.

Beyond process improvements, the implementation of Milwaukee's CGIC also impacted the clearance rates of their nonfatal shootings. Nonfatal shootings with a NIBIN nexus demonstrated an increase from 23.5% in 2014 to 35.7% in 2017. NIBIN related arrest numbers indicate that shootings may have been reduced by roughly 3-12% as compared to what the levels may have been absent of CGIC implementation[1]. The collaboration between partners focusing on disrupting the shooting cycle led to clear investigatory successes in the Milwaukee CGIC.

In 2018, John Doe shot into a vehicle after a car struck his friend. Shots struck a 5-month-old baby, but charges were not issued. However, NIBIN matched the scene casings to a 2017 robbery/shooting of another man. Based on the NIBIN match of the 2018 shooting scene casings to the 2017 robbery/shooting scene casings, a suspect was developed. John Doe was positively identified as the 2017 suspect through a photo array shown to the 2017 shooting survivor. The 2017 robbery/shooting and the 2018 shooting of the 5-month-old child were connected, and John Doe was identified based on the NIBIN match. John Doe also had a prior Juvenile Felony Adjudication. The use of NIBIN and gun crime intelligence was the key to identifying, arresting and charging the violent shooter/felon.

Washington, DC

Between 2014 and 2015, homicides in Washington, DC increased by 54%. While the number of homicides declined in 2016 when compared to 2015, the proportion of gun-related homicides continued to rise. In 2014, firearm-related homicides comprised 69% of all homicides and in 2015, 76% of all homicides were associated with guns. That number increased to 78% in 2016.

When Washington, DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) received the BJA grant funding in the fall of 2016, the decision

1 Koper, C., Vovak, H., and B. Cowell. Evaluation of the Milwaukee Police Department's Crime Gun Intelligence Center (2019)

was made to pilot the CGIC program in the 7th district (7D). 7D has the highest rates of gun violence and violent crime out of the seven police districts in Washington, DC. A series of changes occurred to enhance various CGIC processes. First, to improve ballistic evidence processing additional personnel within the Department of Forensic Services (DFS) Firearms Examination Unit (FEU) were hired as a direct result of the CGIC Initiative funding. The FEU expanded its capacity to include two additional firearms technicians and two contracted firearms examiners. MPD also temporarily reassigned a second detective to the CGIC and detailed an analyst to the CGIC to provide intelligence support to MPD and additional CGIC partners. Multiple trainings emphasizing the importance of NIBIN in investigations were also facilitated by the ATF, United States Attorney's Office (USAO), and DFS. Finally, CGIC personnel, leadership, and external stakeholders have been integrated into various public safety meetings focusing on gun violence prevention. MPD also highlights the success of the CGIC operations and outcomes.

Since the implementation of these various efforts, cases with NIBIN information are cleared at a slightly higher rate than cases without such evidence. Overall, clearance rates for violent offenses with NIBIN hits in the pilot area of 7D (28.4%) are higher than clearance rates for cases without any ballistics evidence (20.8%). Gun violence has been targeted through the utilization of NIBIN in patrol deployments based on potential retaliatory violence and overall enforcement efforts of repeat offender targeting[2]. Washington, DC CGIC demonstrated that through the collaborative efforts of the CGIC, gun violence can strategically be impacted.

> In June 2018, a subject was arrested for carrying a pistol without a license in Washington, DC. The ATF ran an urgent trace on the gun and identified the purchaser. The purchaser admitted to having straw purchased the weapon for a different suspect in Virginia in March 2018. A NIBIN lead was developed by the NIBIN National Correlation and Training Center (NNCTC) indicating that the recovered weapon was connected to a "Discharging a Firearm" incident that occurred in Fairfax, VA in May 2018. ATF agents brought the evidence from Fairfax to DC Department of Forensic Sciences and they were able to do a hit confirmation on the spot. Between the straw purchaser information, the NIBIN hit from DC DFS, and other case info, the Virginia suspect was arrested on a federal complaint in September.

Collaboration was demonstrated via a press conference held in 2019 with the Mayor, USAO, Police Chief, and others emphasizing the success of CGIC through the federal and local partnerships. In addition, the Mayor presented the success of the CGIC program to the City Council with a request for inclusion of the CGIC in the upcoming 2020 City budget, demonstrating sustainability.

Los Angeles, CA

Los Angeles, CA is the second largest city in the U.S. with a population of more than four million residents and is the third largest police force in the country. Despite years of decreases in violent crime, violent gun crime began to increase in Los Angeles (LA) from 2014 to 2016. In October of 2016, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) was awarded funding through BJA to support the implementation and expansion of their crime gun intelligence processes. Examining 2016 as a baseline reveals that the four divisions in Los Angeles that made up only 9% of the city's geographic area, and 17% of its population,

2 Mei, V., Owusu,F.,Quinney, S., Ravishankar,A., Sebastian, D., An Evaluation of Crime Gun Intelligence Center Improvements Implemented in Washington, DC, 2016-2019 (2019)

accounted for 36% of all the violent crime and 42% of murders in Los Angeles.

In January 2017, the ATF, the LAPD, and their partners implemented a CGIC in the 77th Street Division, one of twenty-one patrol stations in the Department. As compared to the other divisions, the 77th Street Division had one of the highest rates of violent crime. Their CGIC became fully operational in January of 2018 and began to use the intelligence-led model to decrease gun violence. Utilizing National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) leads and hits to target the most prolific shooters, Los Angeles began to fully implement the CGIC approach. In October 2018, the Los Angeles CGIC was expanded to include three other South Bureau divisions: Harbor (HBR), Southeast (SOE), and Southwest (SOW).

With the expansion of the CGIC, operations were centralized allowing for increased interactions among the ATF Task Force and South Bureau Homicide detectives, creating a CGIC communication hub. Additional office space was needed to house the grant funded BrassTrax machine, as well as additional CGIC personnel. When this move occurred, it enforced increased communication between partners, a critical component for a successful CGIC.

Throughout the course of the grant funding, the LA CGIC members trained detectives and patrol officers on the importance of comprehensive cartridge case collection and the CGIC process. Evidence transport times have been reduced with the acquisition of two BrassTrax machines. After the implementation of the CGIC in the 77th Division, arrests of individuals in possession of a firearm increased by 18.8% compared to the pre-CGIC period. Comprehensive collection rates of ballistic evidence from shooting incidents also increased by 23% from 2018 to 2019. Specifically examining violent crime in the 77th Division, the post-CGIC implementation period demonstrated a decrease of 18.9% in homicides: a 7.7% decrease in firearm-related homicides. The rate firearm-related robbery decreased by 3.1%[3] as well. The efforts of the Los Angeles CGIC contributed to demonstrable impacts on violent crime in the targeted area.

Through the collaboration of ATF and LAPD, a joint CGIC clandestine NIBIN investigation was conducted. Between May 2018 and November 2018, 3 NIBIN guns were linked to 19 NIBIN hits. These 19 different violent crimes were linked to a serial shooter who was taken into custody. The District Attorney filed 4 counts of attempted murder and 2 counts of felony possession of a firearm.

3 Uchida, C., Quigley, A., Anderson, K. Evaluating the Los Angeles Crime Gun Intelligence Center (2019)

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CRIME GUN INTELLIGENCE CENTERS
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