

## 1. Description of the Issue

The City of Cincinnati is the largest city in Hamilton County, Ohio and is surrounded by twelve counties from Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. Cincinnati has a population of 301,394 residents, including 42.3 % African American, with a median household income of \$40,640, a poverty rate of 26.3%, and a violent crime rate of 6.75 per 1,000 (U.S. Census Bureau 2019 estimate; NIBRS). See Appendix A identifying the high poverty areas and Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZ) that will benefit from this project. We included maps depicting aggravated assaults and homicides as an overlay to visualize impact of targeted focus. People travel to Cincinnati for employment, to visit friends and relatives and for a variety of leisure activities. The Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) is the primary law enforcement agency in the city, and currently employs 974 sworn officers and 137 non-sworn employees. Under the direction of Police Chief Eliot K. Isaac, the agency provides a full range of police services with 751 sworn officers in patrol activities within 78.6 square miles. The CPD has a proud history of engaging problem-solving using data-driven policing as the primary police strategy to address issues of persistent crime and disorder; the CPD works closely with the communities we serve to co-produce public safety. The CPD recognizes that gun-related and violent crime is among the highest order problems communities expect their governments to address; particularly in urban centers that have seen a precipitous increase in violent firearm-related crime.

### 1.1 Precipitous increase in violent firearm-related crime

While national violent crime rates indicate approximately 379.4 violent crimes per 100,000 inhabitants, the City of Cincinnati has experienced approximately 675 violent crimes per 100,000 (FBI/UCR 2019). 2020 has been recorded as Cincinnati's deadliest year, with 94 homicides. This represents a 28.8% *increase in homicides* from 2019. Aggravated assaults are

also up 18% with 919 reported cases. Cincinnati’s homicides are up **39.1%** compared to the 5-year average (see Fig.1)

## 1.2 Time period of increase

As seen in Fig. 1, there is a precipitous increase in aggravated assaults and homicides spanning several years, particularly in 2020.

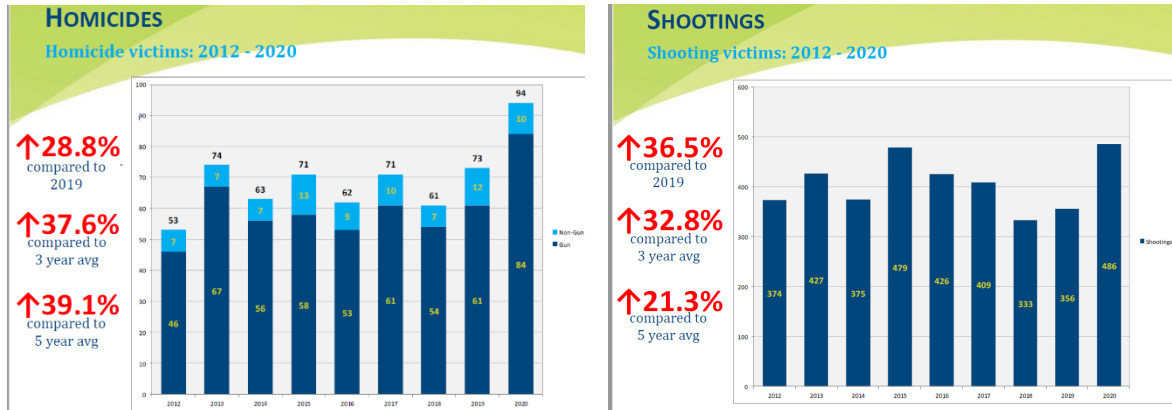


Fig. 1

Although this problem has implications for the entire region, the CPD understands violent crime is highly concentrated in some areas within the city. Despite applying for the FY19 CGIC grant which was not awarded, the CPD is committed to addressing the increase in violent crime. The CPD combined its Gang Unit and Gun Crimes Task Force to create a Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC), supported and funded by City government. The nearly 1 million-dollar renovations for the CGIC headquarters aims to be a permanent part of the Cincinnati Police Department. The CPD already has established gun crimes strategies working with the ATF and will be further described in the sections that follow. While Cincinnati’s crime gun intelligence efforts have been effective, specific limitations remain which could be addressed with additional resources. First, collaborative and cross-agency programming creates challenges related to task management and coordination across project participants. These funds could allow for the hiring of a project coordinator, thereby

increasing project efficacy. Second, data driven efforts require substantial investment in analytic capacity. While CPD currently has crime analysts in each of the City's five districts, and a small, centralized crime analyst group which directly supports gun crime efforts, there are no crime analysts dedicated to the data and intelligence of the CGIC. The additional crime analytic capacity would substantially improve the potential for project success. Finally, specific gaps in resources include processes that increase the time it takes to process evidence. Current processes involve officers or investigators collecting evidence at the scene, then transporting to the CPD Property Unit for storage. Later, NIBIN officers will pick up casings and all automatic and semi-automatic firearms, test fire, and enter information into NIBIN and eTrace. Funding will include training and kits for patrol officers to respond and immediately process crime guns and collect evidence, and for overtime which will be used to call out CGIC investigators to process gun crime scenes and evidence collected by the GERT.

## **2. Project Design and Implementation**

The measurable intent of this project is to locate the areas of chronic, sustained and active gun violence, including those areas which have been impacted by the precipitous increase, and:

- Enhance collaborative efforts with our law enforcement and community partners to swiftly identify the crime guns and their sources using our available intelligence and technology mechanisms and prosecute offenders.
- Develop our Crime Gun Intelligence Center business processes.
- Improve effective investigations and prosecutions of violent crime.
- Implement a comprehensive training program.
- Collaborate with community partners in violent crime prevention strategies.
- Improve response to gunfire events.
- Improved collection of performance data.

- Evaluate CGIC implementation and outcome.

## **2.1 Use of NIBIN machine**

The CPD has both current and historical involvement with the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (**NIBIN**). In 2002, the CPD began using a system to identify shell casings. From 2002 to 2010, the CPD failed at implementing the Four Critical Steps to ensure success with the NIBIN program. In 2015, the CPD and ATF recognized a complete re-tooling of the CPD NIBIN program was necessary and the essential elements of the CGIC model, including the Four Critical Steps and 13 Critical Tasks (Gagliardi, 2010) became the blueprint for the program. In 2016, the CPD purchased an Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS) machine. Currently, three CPD officers, one Hamilton County Sheriff Deputy, and one ATF contractor assist with entries.

## **2.2 ATF NNCTC**

All acquisitions are sent to the National Training and Correlation Center (**NTCC**) for comparison and NIBIN hits are generated. Currently there are two IBIS Brass Trax machines, one owned by the ATF and the other owned by the CPD.

## **2.3 Task Force Officer (TFO)**

The CPD has six dedicated Task Force Officers at the CGIC: Sergeant Luke Putnick and Officers Dan Kowalski, Brett Stratman, Joe Ruchti, Chris Vogelpohl and Jason Wharton. Expansion plans include increasing TFO Sergeants to two for redundancy and ability to manage several gun crime scenes at once.

## **2.4 ATF & eTrace Accounts**

All shell casings and all automatic and semi-automatic firearms are tested and compared, and all firearms are entered into the **eTrace** program.

## **2.5 Gun Tracing Process**

After being entered into the eTrace program, all information is relayed to the CPD and ATF for dissemination. The CPD employs ShotSpotter gunfire notification technology throughout the

city, with plans to expand. All five districts include a footprint of ShotSpotter technology. Procedures are in place to prioritize ShotSpotter response and collect casings which are entered into NIBIN within 24 hours. Additionally, three CPD officers have been authorized as trainers for NIBIN entry (see Appendix B) and have trained the following agencies in our region: Dayton Police, Middletown Police, Boone County Kentucky Sheriff, Butler County Sheriff, Green Township Police, Hamilton County Sheriff, North College Hill Police, Ohio State Patrol, Riverside Police, Springfield Township Police, West Chester Police, Covington Kentucky Police and the Hamilton County Coroner's Office Lab. Additionally, several other agencies utilize the CPD personnel to enter their evidence into NIBIN. Appendix C shows the number of casings and linked cases over the last 5 years; current correlation rates are 40.26%.

## **2.6 USAO Partnership**

This project relies on collaboration, engagement and co-production of safety. The CPD has a strong history of established collaborative working groups which include the United States Attorney's Office (**USAO**), ATF, Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office, Hamilton County Probation, Adult Parole Authority, and the Hamilton County Coroner's Office (see Appendix D). Local and federal prosecutors will be engaged day to day as well as at monthly and quarterly meetings.

## **2.7 MOU**

The CPD maintains its collaboration with the ATF (see Appendix E). The current **MOU** between the CPD and ATF will be updated and renewed within this funding period to reflect the commitment to process firearm evidence with appropriate crime labs following the required timeframes consistent with the CGIC model (Appendix F).

## **2.8 Comprehensive Collection of Evidence**

In addition to the CGIC headquarters, the CPD plans to implement a Gunshot Event Response Team (GERT) in an effort to respond to identified gunfire event scenes, process crime guns in

the field, and enter shell casings into NIBIN. Team members will be trained to become gun recovery experts trained in evidence processing and interview techniques. The GERT will be able to process DNA, fingerprint, and photograph crime guns in the field. They will also have enhanced interview skills necessary to gather intelligence and aid in prosecution of offenders. GERT will have on-going interaction with the CGIC team, including local and federal prosecutors who have designated offices at CGIC headquarters. This team will be comprised of officers from each of the CPD's five districts, equipped with CGIC 'kits' provided with funding from this grant. One or more GERT team members will be available for response, twenty-four hours a day. This team will allow the CPD to gather more evidence from crime guns, faster and with less chance of contamination. A GERT member will check out a kit from the district armory to have on-hand during his or her shift and will return it for the next shift to take out, including spares in the event of multiple scenes.

## **2.9 Timeliness**

CGIC investigators will enter shell casings into NIBIN the same day of collection. Evidence intake procedures utilized by the CGIC and Gert that minimize the administrative time required for submitting evidence, input of evidence prior to full firearm examination, and release of unconfirmed NIBIN leads to the team, will allow for lead notifications to be issued 24-48 hours from submission. The Hamilton County Coroner's Lab is supportive of the CGIC and its goals to accomplish timeliness and follow-up ballistics evidence and DNA (see Appendix D). CPD's CGIC has an ATF test-fire trailer parked at CGIC headquarters and the Hamilton County lab is committed to partnering in processing of DNA or other relevant evidence.

## **2.10 Priority Evidence Submissions**

CPD's CGIC will follow established priorities of evidence submissions based on best practices in the following order: 1.) Current/recent fired cartridge casing evidence, 2.) Current/recent test

fires of crime guns, 3.) Backlogged fire cartridge casing evidence, 4.) Backlogged test fires of crime guns. *It should be noted that the CPD's CGIC does not have a backlog of casing or crime guns.*

### **2.11 Follow-up**

Disseminating the obtained swift intelligence with all stakeholders is very important to turn the intelligence into action on the street. However, strategies to address gun violence are poorly connected across different local, state and federal criminal justice agencies. The first step of any successful multi-jurisdictional joint operation is to share the gathered intelligence in a timely and actionable manner with all related partners so that proper intervention strategies can be employed. Having all partners under the same roof and in one large open-air office space helps to ensure this happens. The ATF has agreed to supply large monitors and whiteboards to share key information for all team members to view on a daily basis. The project coordinator and project manager will ensure this occurs. The project manager will work with CPD's Planning Section to establish policies and procedures that ensure accountability for follow-up investigations and working with CGIC prosecutors.

### **2.12 Feedback Loop**

There will be daily supervisory and roll call meetings, a weekly combined CGIC meeting and monthly review meetings with stakeholders scheduled through the project coordinator. As community partnerships develop, additional law enforcement stakeholders will be invited to attend. The project manager will establish a means of feedback to the NIBIN site and ensure it is a documented performance measure. The project manager will also establish a policy requiring successes to be communicated to the NIBIN site for dissemination, to the entire CGIC team, CPD staff and the Cincinnati community through the project coordinator. (Timeline attached).

## **3. Capabilities and Competencies**

### **3.1 Agency Capabilities and Competencies**

The CPD's current crime gun intelligence program serves as a consistent resource for other departments and has already established relationships with the ATF, USAO, local prosecutors, the crime lab, surrounding agencies, social service providers, and community groups.

The agency has successfully implemented and sustained the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV), currently the longest-running focused deterrence initiative in the country, a Priority Offender Program, and has been awarded a number of prestigious awards, including the Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing in 2017. The CPD created and developed the Cincinnati Citizens Respect Our Witnesses (CCROW) program in 2016. A first-of-its-kind witness support program, CCROW was created to identify new ways to combat the problem of witness intimidation and lack of cooperation that impact successful prosecutions of violent offenders. The FY21 CGIC Initiative provides an opportunity to connect victim (and witness) intervention more adequately with CGI principles to improve project outcomes. Problem solving efforts to combat violent crime using evidence-based practices and coordinated prosecution is part of the CPD culture. CPD has a history of robust community engagement and partnership. The currently operational PIVOT project further reflects the ability to conduct cross-sector and collaborative work, to assemble and conduct meetings, to respond and to act as a working group and is also housed under the Special Services Section which manages the CGIC. The CPD has the required personnel, skills and experience to act as the fiscal agent and employs 12 finance specialists, who dedicate full time attention to the proper management, allocation, and auditing of funds within general budget operations and as a result of grant awards. Further, CPD has experience with hiring grant-funded positions similar to the opportunity available within this solicitation. As previously noted, capabilities include working with external research partners for large-scale projects including partnering with researchers from local universities.



### **3.2 Executive Support**

There is full **executive support** for this project. Police Chief Eliot Isaac is dedicated to the success and sustainment of the Crime Gun Intelligence Center evidenced by the acquisition of needed infrastructure including the renovation of a facility to house the CGIC and its partners under one roof, number of currently assigned officers to the unit, and established community relationships.

### **3.3 Project Manager**

The CPD's CGIC, under the leadership of Chief Eliot K. Isaac and Patrol Bureau Commander Mike John, is led by Captain Dennis Swingley. Captain Swingley has experience in leadership and project development. Captain Swingley authored the department's Asset Forfeiture Manual and has been responsible for managing several high-profile investigations. His duties will include managing and monitoring the daily activities associated with the project, coordinate the development of the GERT team, attendance at presentations and community engagement sessions. He will convene meetings and directly oversee the function of this project and facilitate the cross-sector partnerships by holding regular meetings during the implementation of this initiative to help guide the development of policies and procedures that are perceived by external stakeholders as equitable. The project manager will compile and submit performance data, including mandatory progress reports.

### **3.4 Structure of the Team**

As seen in the organizational chart (Appendix G), the team will be housed at the CGIC headquarters, projected to be ready for move-in by September 1, 2021. Other than supervisory and prosecutorial positions, CGIC personnel will work in one open-air workspace. The team will consist of CPD personnel and TFOs, ATF personnel and TFOs, uniformed and plain clothes officers, analysts, and representatives from probation and/or parole. Funding from this solicitation will allow CPD to add data & intelligence analysts, a project coordinator, and GERT

team members who will be patrol officers or investigators based in the districts and available for response. There are 48 workstations in the open-air office, and private offices for supervisors and prosecutors. It is projected that approximately 35 patrol officers will be trained as GERT members.

#### **4. Plan for Collecting the Data Required for this Solicitation's Performance Measures**

##### **4.1 Process for Measuring**

Crime analysts with in-depth experience working with a variety of criminal justice datasets will be chosen for the funded positions. CPD is a participating agency in the Police Data Initiative promoting public data transparency in law enforcement and already posts sufficiently anonymized data on gunshot victimization, offenses, calls-for-service, and field interrogation reports (FIRs) for public dissemination (see: [data.cincinnati-oh.gov](http://data.cincinnati-oh.gov)). Additionally, CPD has a long history of working with area research institutions (e.g., University of Cincinnati) in evaluation of crime prevention initiatives (e.g. PIVOT). CPD and other project partners will work to identify additional process and project evaluation measures internal and external to CPD and identify key performance benchmarks for the project to achieve. However, ultimate success of the project is measured upon the primary project goal: to locate the areas of chronic, sustained and active gun violence, including those areas which have been impacted by the precipitous increase, and quickly exploit crime gun intelligence to target participants in violent crimes, including violent offenders, illegal possessors of firearms, firearms traffickers, and sources of crime guns on a regional scale.

Sustainability of violence reduction comes in two forms. First and foremost, CGIC works with city and neighborhood community partners to, as crime ceases, spur positive change. The addition of a project coordinator with a social work background will add a level of strategic intervention that will benefit the community. Additionally, CPD maintains and reports weekly on neighborhood-level shooting victim and gunfire event trends. CGIC data will be collected by the appointed crime

analysts. Data will be discussed at CGIC meetings as well as weekly meetings with the Chief, Command Staff, and at CPD's weekly Strategic and Tactical Analytic Review for Solutions (STARS) meetings.

CPD's project plan includes external support from professional researchers in addition to expanding in-house project analytic capacity. CPD has a strong history of partnering with the most highly regarded researchers, including those from University of Cincinnati, Xavier University, and Northern Kentucky University. CPD has a commitment from Dr. Wright, Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Criminal Justice Research at UC, to fully develop this critical component of the project team. His participation is funded by the Ohio Consortium of Crime Science and includes the support of graduate students. The research team will have a robust role in all problem-solving stages (problem definition, ongoing analysis, monitoring, assessment, and final summary reporting) (See Appendix H). All obtained intelligence information should swiftly be turned into action by the combined partners and the expected outcome results (e.g., number of shootings, NIBIN entries and hits, arrests, successful prosecution of offenders, etc.) should have to be both compiled and regularly evaluated to understand precisely to what extent the intelligence provided by the NIBIN system helped to reduce violent crimes.

Data currently available to CPD (identified as the fiscal agent) includes crime reports, call-for-service (dispatch) records, arrest records, field interview/contact card data, and traffic crash reports. The CPD team currently shares analytic work product with the larger working group at bi-weekly meetings, to include shooting, crime, and call summaries and trends within project areas.

This project proposes capitalizing on evidence-based best practices. Broadly, this strategy is designed to capitalize on the ATF Governing Board's CGIC best practices coupled with proactive

law enforcement practices that provide timely NIBIN information that promotes relevant real-time investigative leads in an effort to identify individuals considered the shooters requiring state and/or federal prosecution ([crimegunintelcenters.org](http://crimegunintelcenters.org)) (See also the Center for Evidence Based Crime Policy's Matrix, demonstrating that focused, proactive, and tightly scoped programs tend to generate best project outcomes). Data analysis from performance measures will be evaluated and used as a quality assurance process to *guide the impact of the program*. The City Manager is monitoring the CGIC's implementation process and ongoing operations through its Office of Data Analytics.

### **Conclusion**

Given the commitment by the CPD to the implementation of a formalized CGIC, with plans to become a regional effort, its success is reasonable. The city has committed to financing the majority of the renovations needed and has the necessary relationships with, and commitment from, stakeholders. Key personnel have traveled to the Indianapolis CGIC several times for peer to peer learning. Having learned from our history with NIBIN and eTrace, as well as having the necessary staff and competencies only increase CPD's CGIC potential for impact. Funding will support the formalization of processes necessary to prosecute offenders and provide metrics in place to gauge impact for future expansion of services and the ability to serve as a *nationally recognized* Crime Gun Intelligence enforcement group. The addition of increased crime analysis capacity, project coordination, increased response and evidence processing capacity, and research support will undoubtedly improve the team's ability to make informed decisions. Integrating victim and witness support will create a more comprehensive approach to violence reduction, particularly related to patterns of retaliation. Better informed decision making will improve project efficiency and ultimately lead to a safer community.