

# CASE STUDY

## INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA



In September of 2017, the City of Indianapolis, Indiana, joined the National Public Safety Partnership (PSP). The PSP is a Department of Justice (DOJ)-wide program that helps participating cities address serious violent crime challenges by facilitating the development of data-driven, evidence-based strategies tailored to each city's unique local needs over a three-year engagement.

### ABOUT INDIANAPOLIS

The City of Indianapolis is the most populous city in the State of Indiana, boasting 887,642 residents spread across a total of 361.43 square miles. Located in the center of Indiana, Indianapolis is the state capital and the county seat for Marion County. The demographic makeup of the city's residents is 60.9 percent white, 28.6 percent Black, 10.5 percent Hispanic/Latino, and 3.4 percent Asian. Of all Indianapolis' residents, 18 percent live in poverty, with a citywide median income of \$47,873.<sup>1</sup>

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) serves the City of Indianapolis, containing six precincts (Downtown, East, North, Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest). The department has approximately 1,700 sworn officers and approximately 250 nonsworn personnel. In 2017 (when Indianapolis joined the PSP), IMPD responded to 11,572 violent crimes, including homicides, rapes, aggravated assaults, and robberies.<sup>2</sup>

### PSP PARTICIPATION

Upon beginning PSP, the IMPD and its partners identified three key areas where PSP could provide the most impactful assistance. The first was a need to enhance the IMPD's crime analysis capabilities. Second, the site recognized opportunities to grow its relationships with local stakeholders and partners, including community partners and the local district attorney. Third, the site sought to improve gun crime investigations, which were often hindered by shortcomings in evidence collection, as well as coordination with local and state partners (including the state lab for processing shell casings).

### Local and Federal Partners

The following agencies and organizations were instrumental in carrying out PSP initiatives:

- Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department
- Marion County Prosecutor's Office (MCPO)
- Indiana University
- Marion County Probation Department
- US Attorney's Office—Southern District of Indiana
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF)
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- US Marshals Service (USMS).



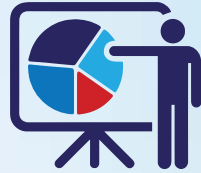
<sup>1</sup> All statistics found at [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Indiana](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/indianapoliscitybalanceindiana,IN/PST045221) (<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/indianapoliscitybalanceindiana,IN/PST045221>)

<sup>2</sup> As defined by the FBI's Unified Crime Reporting (UCR) Program.

During the PSP engagement, IMPD developed a strategic plan that identified long-term strategic outcomes for the organization and interim benchmark goals to guide full implementation of the plan. These included goals related to the use of technology, analysis, and research to address gun violence, ensuring appropriate distribution of resources, enhancing public awareness of and collaboration with IMPD efforts to reduce gun violence, and greater coordination among criminal justice stakeholders. For each of these goals, the IMPD also created corresponding strategies to facilitate success.

## GOAL 1

**USE TECHNOLOGY ANALYSIS & RESEARCH TO UNDERSTAND & RESPOND TO GUN VIOLENCE**



## STRATEGIES

- 1 Implement the appropriate recommendations from the PSP Technology Assessment.
- 2 Implement the appropriate recommendations from the Crime Analysis Assessment.
- 3 Produce real-time analytical products that can be used strategically and tactically to address gun violence.
- 4 Leverage NIBIN and the Crime Gun Intelligence Center to improve gun crime investigations.

## GOAL 2

**HAVE THE RIGHT NUMBER OF THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE RIGHT PLACES DOING THE RIGHT WORK TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE.**



## STRATEGIES

- 1 Assess the current allocation of staff and organizational structure to determine whether they are sufficient to reduce gun violence.
- 2 Develop a staffing plan that addresses the needs identified above and takes into account personnel separation and promotions.
- 3 Develop a patrol strategy to address gun violence.
- 4 Assess the effectiveness of the investigative process for gun crimes and make any required improvements.

## GOAL 3

**GUN VIOLENCE IS A PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH EMERGENCY REQUIRING A HOLISTIC RESPONSE.**



## STRATEGIES

- 1 Develop and implement a marketing campaign on how everyone can help reduce gun violence in Indy.
- 2 Convene a summit on gun violence to focus on solutions and invite all relevant stakeholders, organizations, and agencies.
- 3 Work with appropriate organizations and agencies to develop and implement gun violence prevention and intervention programs.
- 4 Ensure that programs and tactics are supporting each other and are coordinated.

## GOAL 4

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES ARE WORKING TOGETHER AND HOLDING EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE FOR REDUCING GUN VIOLENCE.**



## STRATEGIES

- 1 Identify a means of bringing all the CJ agencies in Indy together on a regular basis to develop strategies and programs to address gun violence. (Seek membership in the local CJ coordinating committee.)
- 2 Analyze how gun cases flow through the CJ system to determine where improvements in sharing information and hand-offs can occur.
- 3 Ensure that CJ strategies, programs, and tactics are coordinated including IVRP, CGIC, Promise Zone, State Courts, and Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN).
- 4 Increase federal PSN prosecutions through targeting the most violent offenders in the most violent areas for federal prosecution.

Through this concerted effort of training and technical assistance (TTA) delivery and strategic planning, PSP has helped IMPD advance its crime analysis capabilities, relationships with partners (including community partners), gun crime investigations, and supporting technology. Each of these advancements is further discussed below.

## Enhancements to Crime Analysis Capabilities

The PSP provided the IMPD with technical assistance and training to help it improve its crime analysis capacity. Overall, IMPD's involvement with PSP has resulted in organizational improvements in the key areas identified through the engagement. Perhaps the most significant improvement was enhancements to IMPD's crime analysis capabilities as evidenced by the increased number of analyst personnel, improved competencies of the analysts (achieved through training), and a greater utilization of technology. Using IMPD's already impressive grant team as a foundation to obtain funding, the IMPD hired 8 additional analysts and 1 analyst supervisor. As a result, the department now has over 14 crime analysts. Analysts hired by the agency are used in several ways, including being deployed to the Homicide Unit and supporting the Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) and Violence Reduction Team. Additionally, analysts provide district-based crime statistics, which allow for informed operational decision making. Finally, IMPD began using analysts to conduct social networking analysis, identifying patterns of socialization and taking preventative steps based on that information (see also below related to violence interrupters).

Further, PSP provided the analysts with extensive training and opportunities for peer exchanges through participation in the International Association of Crime Analysts (IACA) and Chicago Crime Fighters conferences, respectively. Participation in these conferences had tangible results. For instance, shortly after attending the Chicago Crime Fighters conference, IMPD redesigned its Real-Time Crime Center (which was response-based) into an Incident Analysis Center (IAC), allowing for more regular tactical analysis to proactively support districts. This has also allowed the IMPD to switch from creating summary statistical reports to using a coordinated approach based on person, place, and time trends.

## Improved Relationships with Partners

Another area of improvement was IMPD's relationships with federal, state, and local partners. While IMPD had a historically strong relationship with its federal partners, the engagement with PSP allowed the department to take a more unified approach with other agencies. For example, the US Attorney's Office (USAO) Southern District of Indiana dedicated an Assistant US Attorney to each of the IMPD's six service districts. They focus largely on drug and gang crimes, meeting regularly with lieutenants in each patrol district to share information about local trouble spots and offenders. The MCPO also met with representatives from each patrol district and now joins meetings with the USAO that are focused on identifying problem offenders. In another example, federal partners of the Indianapolis PSP site established an agreement to respond to crime scenes alongside IMPD officers.

Additionally, IMPD expanded the CGIC, a partnership of local and federal agencies aimed at reducing violent crime.<sup>3</sup> The group now boasts approximately 60 representatives from various law enforcement, prosecutorial, and supervised release

<sup>3</sup>See also [Indiana Crime Gun task force to track suspects, illegal guns in region \(indystar.com\)](#)

## EXAMPLES OF TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO THE INDIANAPOLIS PSP SITE

### Peer Exchanges

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg (Electronic Monitoring)
- Oakland (Ceasefire)
- Institute for Non-Violence Chicago (Community Involvement)

### Training

- Victim Advocacy
- International Association of Crime Analysts
- Collective Efficacy

### Technical Assistance

- Strategic Messaging
- Crime Intelligence Analyst (IA) Supervisor
- Witness Protection

agencies. During its meetings, the CGIC discusses recent crime trends and decides as a group how to best respond. This approach is now being recognized nationally, with other agencies implementing similar models based on IMPD's.

The IMPD has also reinstated the Indianapolis Violence Reduction Partnership (IVRP), a collaboration between IMPD, nearby jurisdictions, prosecutors, and federal partners to identify a priority list of violent offenders. Meetings are informed by CGIC analysts using tools such as social network analysis to identify priority offenders and an ongoing project with the Marion County Probation Department and Indiana University researchers to identify priority offenders. In order to effectively share information across agencies, the IVRP developed a SharePoint site to allow for real-time information updates and tracking of targets. Once targets are identified, the IVRP also works with community partners to provide interventions for high-priority targets, which we discuss further below.

## **Improved Relationship with Community**

The IMPD also made important strides in strengthening its relationship with Indianapolis community members during the PSP engagement. For instance, in 2018, IMPD hired a violence reduction director. The director works six "community Peacekeepers" from the Office of Public Health and Safety, in partnership with the Indy Public Safety Foundation. The violence reduction director and the peacekeepers seek to reduce homicide and nonfatal shooting rates by identifying potential offenders and victims of shootings and providing them with services to help them make positive life choices. The violence reduction director and peacekeepers are part of the IMPD's and city's three-pronged violence interruption approach. This approach to violence interruption involves community members in three separate capacities: (1) individuals who conduct outreach with at-risk community members, (2) life coaches for select community members, and (3) individuals who provide on-scene interruption services.<sup>4</sup> Currently, the city's goal is to hire up to 50 interrupters, who will contribute to the work in one of these capacities.

Additionally, the department established community councils in each IMPD district, which focus on issues such as homelessness, alcohol and drug treatment, educational opportunities, job training, and other social issues that members of the community may need to address to reduce violence. The community councils also work with the IMPD's violence reduction director and two dedicated community peacekeepers, acting as a liaison between IMPD and the community and working towards strengthening trust. The PSP lent support to this process by providing TTA to the councils to help build their operational structure. As part of its community outreach, the Indianapolis PSP site also helped establish the city's first community-based violence prevention partnership grants. In August 2018, it awarded grants to five community groups to support violent crime reduction efforts within the community.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, after recognizing the need to improve communications following critical incidents, IMPD engaged with PSP subject matter expert (SME) Laura McElroy to develop a communications strategy and plan for such events. The plan provides formal, consistent guidelines for communicating with external groups (including civilian witnesses to critical incidents and the community at large through social media and traditional news media) and guidelines for enhancing internal communication in order to ensure members receive consistent messaging from the department. Additionally, the plan reiterates the importance of a proactive approach to community engagement, recognizing that "every employee and officer should focus on service first and take pride in helping the community, whether it is tracking down the answer to a challenging question, assisting a victim or victim's family, responding to inquiries about police activity in a neighborhood, or dealing with an ongoing, frustrating issue." As part of executing the strategic plan, IMPD and its public information officer (PIO) collaborated regularly with PSP's communications SME when critical incidents occurred, allowing for real-time assistance in getting vital information to community members as quickly as possible.

<sup>4</sup> See also [Indianapolis crime: Interrupters report successes, but 'not there yet'](https://www.indystar.com/story/news/2018/08/01/indianapolis-mayor-joe-hogsett-awards-violence-prevention-grants-crime/874877002/) (indystar.com)

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/2018/08/01/indianapolis-mayor-joe-hogsett-awards-violence-prevention-grants-crime/874877002/> for local coverage of the grant awards.

Additionally, the department sought to incorporate community insights into the investigative processes. In March of 2021, the department hosted a virtual “Community Conversation” session for homicide investigations to discuss the investigative process. IMPD works with a local partner to get the right people to participate in these conversations and increase turnout for the event. IMPD also posted the event on its Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/IMPDNews](http://www.facebook.com/IMPDNews)).



## Enhanced Gun Crime Investigations

Through PSP, IMPD has also vastly enhanced its ability to investigate gun crimes through additional training and greater emphasis on collecting and processing evidence. For example, IMPD implemented a strong training component for investigating violent crime, both internally and externally. Using PSP TTA, IMPD provided all officers with updated training on criminal investigations and evidence preservation, stressing the importance of a bottom-up solution to conducting such investigations. Additionally, IMPD co-hosted a Homicide and Major Crimes Investigators school attended by detectives from across Indiana and hosted a crime scene assessment training attended by over 90 people from 23 different Indiana agencies. Operationally, this has resulted in improved evidence processing. With assistance from the PSP, the IMPD also applied and received a Bureau of Justice Assistance Crime Gun Intelligence Center grant.

In another example, prior to the PSP engagement, officers responding to shots fired may not have looked for bullet casings if no person was found in the area. Now, IMPD ensures all evidence is collected, including by sending follow-up teams to canvass a scene for evidence the next day if a shooting occurs at night. Through greater training and greater organizational emphasis, officers now collect more shell casings than before (see below).

PSP partners also enhanced the process for submitting shell casings to the state laboratory. Prior to PSP engagement, the turnaround time from submission of evidence to a completed review with the state laboratory took one to two weeks. As part of PSP engagement, the ATF accepted Indianapolis into the ATF National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) Correlation Center in June 2019, instituting a structure in which an agent in each patrol district helps streamlining processing. IMPD also initiated a new process for evaluating NIBIN leads, requiring agents to follow up on each lead. Collaborating with the ATF Correlation Center and the State Crime Lab to expedite casing and firearm processing; IMPD now receives results within 24 to 48 hours.

As a result of PSP engagement and greater emphasis and training from the department, IMPD has vastly increased the success of its evidence collection efforts. For instance, in 2018, the IMPD received 435 NIBIN leads; this nearly doubled in 2019 to 848. This number has since increased to approximately 2,071 in 2021. Overall, in 2021, the IMPD submitted 3,726 shell casings into NIBIN, entered 4,325 firearms, and linked 31 gun crimes, leading to 32 federal charges and 237 state gun-related charges.

## Improved Technology

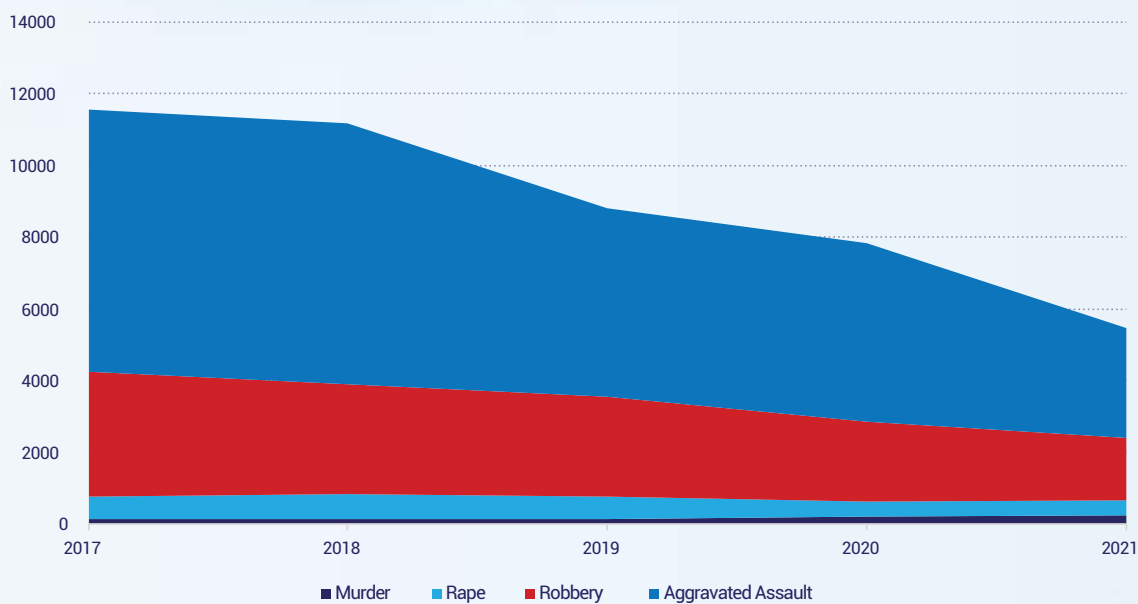
Following a recommendation from the PSP, IMPD assigned a full-time officer focusing on technology issues within the department. IMPD also hired its first chief technology officer, an Enterprise Architect, to help implement and set strategic goals within the department. The department's engagement with PSP has also increased its utilization of technology. IMPD purchased 1,100 body-worn cameras (BWCs) and, in August of 2020, began equipping all officers with BWCs. In addition, the department purchased 34 mountable criminal surveillance cameras and developed a corresponding deployment strategy. The department also embraced a significant transition of its computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and

records management system (RMS), which now include several analytical and situational awareness components. This transition occurred around the same time IMPD upgraded its radios, which will also assist in enhancing deployment strategies through GPS capabilities.

## Reductions in Violent Crime

Since beginning the PSP engagement, the City of Indianapolis has seen an overall reduction in FBI Unified Crime Reporting violent crimes (including murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault). The city saw a 52.6 percent decrease in these types of crime since 2017, led primarily by a 58.1 percent reduction in aggravated assaults and a 50.4 percent reduction in robberies (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: VIOLENT CRIME SINCE 2017



## KEYS FOR SUCCESS

- **INCREASED DATA ANALYTIC CAPACITY:** In expanding its analytic capacity, the IMPD hired two additional analysts and an analyst supervisor. These individuals were critical in helping IMPD move from reactive analysis to proactive approaches. In particular, the IMPD credits PSP sponsorship to send teams to the IACA as being extremely valuable in increasing the skillsets of analysts and helping to implement best practices in data analytics.
- **AGENCY DEDICATION:** Throughout the entire PSP process, organizational leaders (including the prior and current chiefs and assistant chiefs) demonstrated a dedication to working with the PSP site team (consisting of a strategic site liaison, program advisor, and DOJ program champion) and the TTA providers. From the beginning of the engagement, IMPD leadership personally participated in PSP coordination and IMPD delegates were regulars at PSP conferences.
- **NURTURED PARTNERSHIPS:** IMPD worked closely with federal, state, and local partners to take a whole-system approach to reducing violence. By nurturing its relationships with the local prosecutor; community organizations; and the ATF, DEA, and FBI, IMPD was able to maintain regular meetings, gather real-time updates, and improve investigative capabilities.