

CASE STUDY

TULSA, OKLAHOMA



In August 2018, the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, joined the National Public Safety Partnership (PSP). The PSP is a nationwide Department of Justice (DOJ) 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 needs over a multiyear engagement. Tulsa concluded the PSP engagement in December 2022.



ABOUT TULSA

The City of Tulsa is the second-largest city in the state of Oklahoma and 47th most populous city in the United States.¹ Tulsa's past, present, and future are reflected in the downtown architecture, which is one of the most extensive collections of Art Deco in the nation. Tulsa's location on the banks of the Arkansas River provides recreational opportunities on the riverbanks, including the Oklahoma Aquarium and the Gathering Place, a 66.5-acre park. Tulsa's historic districts include Kendall Whittier, the new Global District, and the nationally renowned Greenwood District, home to the historic Black Wall Street. A vast majority of Tulsa is located on Creek and Cherokee territory.



In 2021, the estimated population of Tulsa was 411,401 consisting of 63.34 percent white, 17.1 percent Hispanic, 15 percent Black, 8.9 percent two or more races, and 4.5 percent American Indian and Alaska Native individuals.²

The Tulsa Police Department (TPD) is the largest agency charged with protecting 60 percent of the Tulsa County population (672,858) and responding to 81 percent of the total reported index crimes (31,934).³ In October 2022, TPD was staffed with 817 sworn and 187 non-sworn personnel. To serve the community and address crime, TPD has three uniform divisions focusing on three geographical areas and responding to approximately 270,000 calls for service annually. TPD uses evidence-based, data-driven metrics to develop and implement specific tactics within the patrol divisions and measure outcomes.

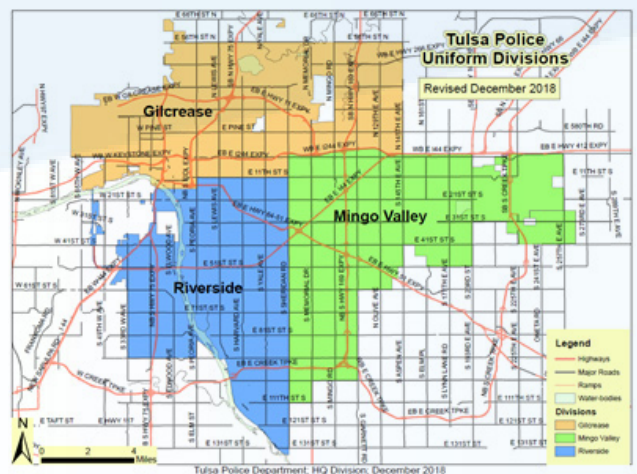


Figure 1: TPD Uniform Patrol Divisions

The TPD mission statement is to work in partnership with the Tulsa community to provide quality service, protect life and property, prevent crime, and resolve problems so all people can live without fear in a safe community. Building sustainable relationships with the people TPD serves to address public safety concerns is a priority for TPD.

1 City population ranking based on 2020 Census data.
2 U.S. Census Bureau, Tulsa City, Oklahoma, Quick Facts, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/tulsacityoklahoma>.
3 Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (2022) 2021 Tulsa County Crimes, <https://osbi.ok.gov/statistical-analysis-center/data-and-statistics/tulsa-county>.

LOCAL AND FEDERAL PARTNERS

From the onset of the PSP, Tulsa committed to collaborating with partners to reduce violent crime. Partnerships with local, state, and federal organizations have continued and strengthened throughout the PSP. The following agencies and organizations were instrumental in carrying out PSP initiatives:

- TPD
- Tulsa County District Attorney's Office (TCDA)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- U.S. Attorney's Office (USAO)—Northern District of Oklahoma (NDOK)
- U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)
- U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- U.S. Marshals Service (USMS)



PSP PRIORITIES

Upon beginning the PSP, TPD and its partners identified three key areas to use PSP assistance to build collective capacity to reduce violent crime. These were:

- 1. Crime Analysis**
- 2. Technology**
- 3. Gun Violence**

The PSP helped Tulsa identify its existing capacity in these three areas, then provided training and technical assistance (TTA) to build upon existing strengths and expand capacity while leveraging partnerships to successfully reduce and respond to violent crime.

CRIME ANALYSIS

During the 2019 PSP Symposium, representatives of the Tulsa PSP partners selected crime analysis as one of their priority focus areas. The Tulsa PSP partners committed to expanding organizational capacity to use data and analytics to drive all violent crime reduction efforts implemented through the PSP. PSP subject matter experts (SMEs) worked with the Tulsa PSP site to identify existing analytic capacity, existing resources and expertise, and recommendations for enhancements and PSP support. Upon entering the PSP, the TPD employed nine crime and intelligence analysts and three additional sworn investigators dispersed across the organization. Many of the analysts maintained specialized expertise (e.g., financial intelligence), while others were embedded into specific patrol divisions or specialized units. While this allowed analysts to develop and maintain expertise in their given areas, they lacked opportunities for intradepartmental coordination and collaboration.

At the recommendation of PSP, TPD decided to bring together nearly all the crime and intelligence analysts to form a consolidated unit to allow for professional development, greater ability to leverage the individual skill sets of analytic products and streamline processes and workflows for consistency and efficiency. In September 2019, TPD Chief Chuck Jordan authorized the Public Safety Analysis Unit (PSAU) to conduct tactical, strategic, and administrative analysis of crimes trends and patterns. The PSAU was placed under the leadership of the TPD Crime Lab Director.

As an early step to launching the PSAU, TPD held a series of listening sessions with the analysts to gather input and ideas, and to answer questions about the direction of this new formation of analytic personnel. PSP SME Julie Wartell visited Tulsa to hold a two-day crime analysis summit with TPD and other agencies who work with TPD's analysts. This summit focused on the importance of crime analysis for evidence-based policing and how TPD units could work together to increase access to data, conduct analysis, and use resources to address crime issues.

EXAMPLES OF TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO THE TULSA PSP SITE

PSP SME Wartell collaborated with the Crime Lab Director and analysts to develop an organizational plan for the PSAU, including creating a PSAU Supervisor position and developing formalized career tracks for analysts. TPD filled the PSAU Supervisor position in July 2021. TPD also worked with the PSP to offer regular professional development opportunities for analysts, including taking virtual IACA analysis and intelligence courses, annual IACA conferences and workshops, and the Naval Postgraduate School's (NPS) Social Network Analysis (SNA) symposium. After returning from the SNA symposium, TPD received additional technical assistance from the NPS to launch an SNA project examining homicide cases. TPD later replicated this project for nonfatal shooting cases. While this work was labor intensive because of the outdated nature of TPD's internally built Records Management System (RMS), the SNA projects became an important endeavor to explore the contributing factors of gun violence in Tulsa.

In May 2021, the City of Tulsa experienced a sophisticated cyberattack. This significantly impacted TPD's ability to draw crime data reports until the process of rebuilding dashboards and reentering case reports was complete. TPD is currently working with a vendor to implement a new RMS, which will greatly enhance the PSAU's ability to create automated reports and more complex analytic reports without extensive manual actions.⁴ In early 2022, TPD began releasing heat maps of Part I violent crimes for the public to view.

TECHNOLOGY

Early in the PSP engagement, TPD also worked with a PSP SME to identify opportunities to implement proven technologies to enhance Tulsa's data-driven violent crime reduction efforts and opportunities to better use existing technologies. Following recommendations to improve the implementation of technology initiatives, TPD made several organizational changes to support IT administration and organizational expertise on policing technology. TPD hired a Director for the Police Information Technology Division and began hiring civilian project managers with experience in managing large-scale technology implementation projects. Hiring civilian project managers has helped retain police IT expertise, which was more difficult when officers rotated through these positions. The IT staff are certified project managers and liaise with the City of Tulsa's IT services.

CONFERENCES

- Manhattan District Attorney's Office Intelligence-Driven Prosecution Symposium (2019)
- Los Angeles Crimefighters Leadership Conference (2019)
- Public Safety Summit: Sustaining Transformation (2019)

PEER EXCHANGES WITH:

- The Memphis Police Department and the New Jersey State Police: Real Time Crime Centers (2019–2021)
- The Chicago Police Department: Strategic Decision Support Centers (2020)
- The Chattanooga Police Department: Victim Services (2020)
- The Brooklyn Park Police Department: Community Policing (2020)
- The Milwaukee Police Department: Shooting Review Meetings (2020)
- The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department: Counter Terrorism Center and Real Time Crime Center (2021–2022)
- The New York District Attorney's Office: Evidence-Based Investigations and Prosecutions (2022)
- The Denver Police Department: Place Network Investigations (2022)

TRAINING

- International Homicide Investigator's Association Homicide Trainings (2018–2019)
- Naval Postgraduate School Social Network Analysis Symposium and Technical Assistance (2019)
- FBI Cellular Analysis Survey Team Training (2019)
- FBI Digital Imaging and Video Recovery Training (2019)
- PSP Virtual Academy: Leadership Strategies (2021–2022)
- International Association of Crime Analysts (IACA) Online Courses and Conferences (2021–2022)
- Strategic Communications for Command Training (2022)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Crime Analysis Technical Assistance (2019–2020)
- Grant Capacity Review and Technical Assistance (2019–2021)

NETWORKING

- PSP Crime Analysis Community of Practice
- PSP Leadership Community of Practices
- PSP Prosecutors Community of Practice
- PSP Technology Community of Practice
- PSP Public Information Officers Community of Practice

4 TPD (2022). 2021 Tulsa Police Department Annual Report. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qfQuCcZ3FvVzHVeqASjG0bRuzUBJ6l0m/view>

One of the largest IT projects TPD managed during the PSP was the implementation of a new RMS to replace the internally built RMS that no longer provided the full functionality required in today's technology-driven environment. This work continues, but once implemented, it will greatly enhance TPD's records management and data analysis capabilities. Alongside the RMS, TPD is implementing a new mobile computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system and several integrated case management modules.

In 2022, the TPD began piloting the use of Axon's Flock automated license plate readers (LPRs). Within the first two months, TPD recovered \$400,000 worth of stolen property, including 28 vehicles and six guns. The Flock cameras also provided critical information that led to 20 felony arrests in the same period. As the pilot period ends, TPD plans to purchase additional cameras and use crime data to determine locations to install them. TPD recognizes the importance of community engagement in the implementation of technology that is new to Tulsa and the TPD, and therefore began the project with several community meetings to provide information about the purpose of LPRs, the limitations of what is captured by LPR cameras, and TPD's policies that govern the use of LPR data. PSP technical assistance helped inform TPD's communication strategy for current and future technology-related initiatives.

Another major initiative during Tulsa's PSP initiative was learning about the best practices of Real Time Crime Centers (RTCCs) from other cities that have had RTCCs for many years. The Tulsa PSP partners explored the various models of RTCCs through virtual and in-person peer exchange site visits to see how different RTCC models served differing purposes for local government and law enforcement agencies. Tulsa examined the RTCCs operated by the New Jersey State Police, the Jefferson County (Alabama) Sheriff's Office, the Memphis Police Department, and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, among others. Throughout the multiyear learning process, TPD engaged the City of Tulsa, the Tulsa City Council, and the community, providing information about what RTCCs are, how they function, and the outcomes seen by other best-in-class RTCCs. During a follow-up site visit to Las Vegas, Nevada, the Tulsa PSP invited Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynam and City Council members to accompany them and see the RTCC in action. Tulsa put forth an organized, forward-looking proposal to establish its own center, known as the Tulsa Real-Time Information Center (RTIC).

Today, the City of Tulsa has committed \$2.5 million to fund the initial launch of the Tulsa RTIC and has begun to outfit a location within City Hall to house the center and staff. The RTIC will become the hub to monitor the Flock LPR system, public traffic cameras already owned by the City, and other cameras owned by other entities. TPD hopes to have the RTIC operational, with 18 staff hired and trained, by June 2023. Once the mobile CAD is operational, TPD expects to be able to monitor police vehicles' GPS, which would enable monitoring of officers' time in crime hot spots and the development of goals for proactive time spent patrolling certain neighborhoods.

The goals of the RTIC, LPR, and all other technology initiatives is to support efforts to respond to and reduce violent crime. During a recent press conference, Tulsa Police Chief Wendell Franklin said that the RTIC would serve as a force multiplier, help officers respond more effectively to crimes in progress, and provide valuable information to investigators after the fact. "By deploying this type of technology, [the community] will see less police enforcement because with precision [officers] are able to identify who is involved ... rather than stopping everyone in a certain area," he said.

GUN VIOLENCE

In 2018, Tulsa received a federal grant to establish a regional Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC). TPD used these funds to acquire a second National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) machine to analyze firearms casings found during gun crime investigations. This, with additional staff, allowed TPD to open the CGIC's analytic capacity to other departments in the greater Tulsa region. Tulsa built out a fully operational CGIC in accordance with ATF standard operating procedures within the TPD Crime Lab. The NIBIN leads generated by the CGIC have been instrumental in solving numerous nonfatal shooting cases. TPD's data shows that NIBIN leads increased by 400 in the period between 2017, when the first NIBIN machine was installed, and September 2021. The number of firearms eTrace results increased by 424 percent over the same period.

In 2018, TPD also established a Crime Gun Unit (CGU) within TPD's Special Investigations Division, which investigates all NIBIN leads generated by the CGIC. The TPD CGU works closely with ATF Special Agents and other law enforcement agencies to investigate shootings, felony possession cases, and other crime gun cases. In 2021, the CGU recovered 184 crime guns and executed 78 search warrants.⁵

In 2021, TPD saw a significant decrease in gun violence compared to 2020. Aggravated assaults with a firearm decreased by 12 percent compared to 2021, and homicides decreased by 23 percent (67 homicides in 2021 compared to 87 in 2020). In 2021, the Tulsa Police Homicide Unit investigated 62 homicides. Of those, 57 were solved as of March 2022, a homicide solve rate of 92 percent. The TPD has historically maintained a very high solve rate for homicides, consistently attaining solve rates above 90 percent. TPD attributes this to three main factors: the dedication and expertise of its homicide detectives, the amount of resources dedicated to homicide investigations in the first 48 hours, and the engagement of the Tulsa community.

TPD engaged a team of PSP experts to help identify the organization's investigative capabilities for nonfatal shootings and help chart a path forward to apply TPD's success in homicide investigations to all shooting cases. As a result, TPD has conducted in-depth temporal analysis of gun crimes to align CGU staff and resources to the shifts when nonfatal shootings most often occur. TPD's creation of the CGU helped to ensure that all NIBIN leads were fully investigated by specially trained investigators, and TPD's solve rate for nonfatal shootings has increased as a result. The CGU has enhanced communication and coordination processes for cases involving other investigative units, such as the robbery or domestic violence units.

VICTIM SERVICES

With the assistance of PSP, TPD secured funding to establish victim services by TPD advocates and to proactively work with community groups and other City services to engage community members in the aftermath of shootings. Before PSP, TPD did not have its own victim assistance program. Crime victims and their families were supported by the District Attorney's Office once their cases were referred for prosecution or by community-based advocates when community members experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, or child abuse. Since establishing its own Victim Services Unit in September 2019, TPD has been able to provide immediate crisis intervention and trauma-informed assistance to victims and their families. In 2019 TPD also hired its first victim advocate, who was soon followed by two more victim advocates by 2020. The advocates were initially funded through grants, including the Victims of Crime Act Fund and a grant from the DOJ Office for Victims of Crime. These advocates provide support for all victims and their families, including those affected by gun violence, robbery, burglary, sexual assault, elder abuse, homicide, and suicide. The victim advocates have also been able to provide support to TPD families after line-of-duty injuries. Within the first two years of operations, the Victim Services Unit helped over 2,000 victims of violent crime, and in 2021 alone the unit provided over 2,431 services and referrals to 1,079 victims.⁶

⁵ TPD, 2022. 2021 *Annual Report*.

⁶ TPD, 2022. 2021 *Annual Report*.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Tulsa PSP has become an example for other PSP sites on how to collaborate effectively on grant-funded opportunities to address violent crime. During the first year of the PSP, PSP SME Joan Brody worked with the Tulsa partner organizations to develop a grants strategy—an organizational plan guiding how to identify funding priorities, generate program ideas generated, and develop proposals. The Tulsa partners developed an interagency grants committee that meets regularly to discuss violence prevention, review intervention priorities, and collaborate to submit grant proposals. Through this committee's work, Tulsa successfully applied for and was awarded several federal grants for collaborative programs, such as the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program and the Community-Based Crime Reduction Initiative. In 2022, the Tulsa grants committee began offering and delivering "Grants 101" trainings to agencies across northeast Oklahoma.

TPD developed its own internal process for grants management, beginning with a mechanism for anyone in the organization to submit grant ideas and requests. All funding ideas are vetted against TPD's overall strategic plan and the PSP violence reduction strategic plan. Internal experts are tapped to help write white papers, program abstracts, or grant proposals. In 2021, TPD was awarded the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Strategies for Policing Innovation award, which is focused on supporting RTIC development. In 2022, TPD was awarded the Emmett Till Cold Case Investigations and Prosecution grant. The Tulsa County District Attorney's Office has been awarded seven competitive federal grants since 2021, most of which involve collaborations with other PSP partners.

In Tulsa, collaboration with the community is just as important as the collaboration within the criminal justice agencies. Shortly after being appointed Chief of Police in 2020, Chief Franklin established the Community Engagement Unit (CEU) within the Chief's Section. The CEU brings together TPD's community engagement functions to drive the department's approach to collaborative policing, including the community engagement officers from each patrol division, school resource officers, and the Bike and River Patrol, among others. In 2021, TPD re-envisioned its Community Advisory Board to create individual Community Advisory Boards for each patrol division to aid in more direct engagement and outcomes for local communities.

REDUCTIONS IN VIOLENT CRIME

Violent crime in Tulsa peaked in 2020, as it did in many other major cities across the United States, but TPD saw promising trends in 2021. The reported violent crime rate for 2021 was 624.9 per 100,000 inhabitants, nearly a 26 percent decrease. TPD reported a 25 percent decrease in aggravated assaults between 2021 and 2022, including a 12 percent decrease in aggravated assaults with a firearm. Even homicides decreased by 23 percent in 2021 compared to 2020.⁷ While TPD's statistics for 2021

Tulsa Violent Crime Rate (per 100,000), 2016-2020

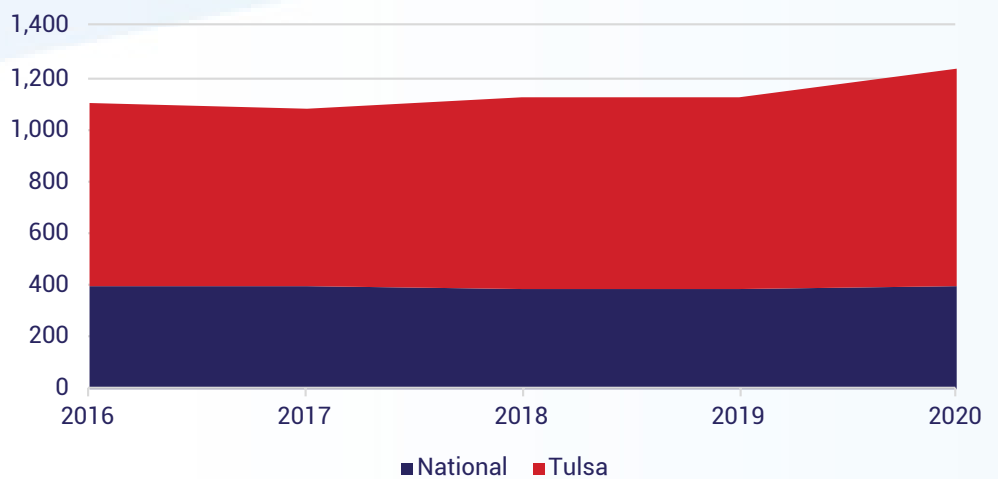


Figure 2: Tulsa Violent Crime Rate, 2016-2020 from TPD

7 Data provided to PSP from TPD in 2022. The ransomware attack may have a small impact on the data provided in 2021.

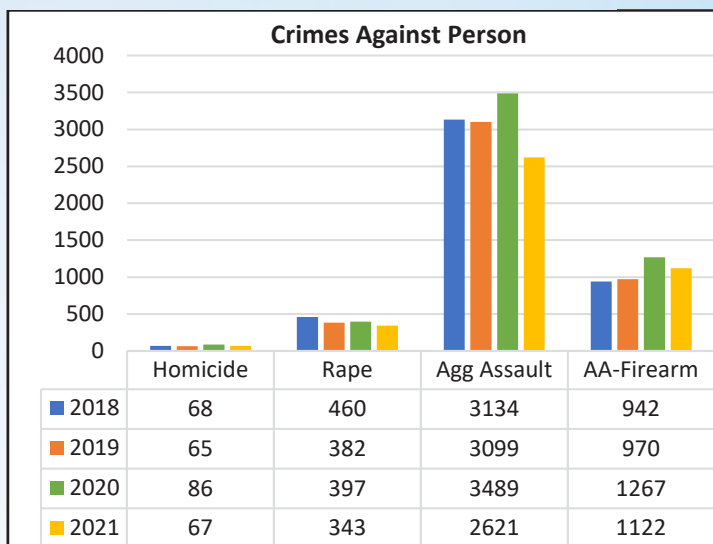


Figure 3: 4-year Crime Against Persons, TPD

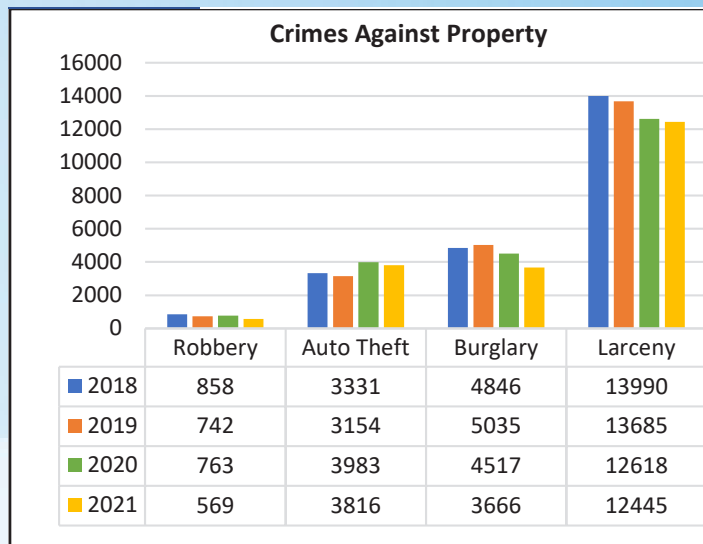


Figure 4: 4-year Crime Against Property, TPD

are not perfect due to the ransomware attack, these trends continued in most categories into 2022. For example, according to TPD, Tulsa has achieved year-after-year decreases in robberies and burglaries.

KEYS FOR SUCCESS

- Organization-wide collaboration on PSP priorities:** TPD announced the City's acceptance into PSP to the entire department, communicating the purpose and benefits of PSP to all staff. Chief Franklin updated personnel on PSP developments and found opportunities for officers, supervisors, detectives, and analysts to participate in TTA from PSP. From command staff-level communications training to attending crime analysis summits and national homicide or technology trainings, Tulsa found ways for the PSP to achieve its overall violent crime reduction goals and benefit individual members. When the PSP partners developed a joint violent crime reduction strategic plan, TPD integrated the PSP objectives and goals into its overall organizational vision.
- Investment in organizational change:** Much of Tulsa's gains during the PSP engagement came from investing time and resources into organizational change to increase capacity and skill in PSP focus areas foundational to evidence-based crime reduction (e.g., crime analysis, community engagement, technology). Organizational change takes time and commitment to create new unit structures, policies, and protocols; hire and train new staff; and implement new IT systems to support the work. These efforts are time consuming and often take place behind the scenes without broad recognition or commendation. And yet, it is because Tulsa took the time to ensure infrastructure was set up to support new crime reduction strategies that Tulsa is beginning to see trends move in a positive direction.
- Collaboration for capacity building:** Violent crime reduction requires a multidisciplinary approach. Upon entering the PSP, Tulsa partners reported having positive relationships among the key criminal justice agencies and within the community. These partnerships were tested during challenges (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic, the ransomware attack, and others) and became the foundation for capacity building across the region, be it through grants management or the RTIC.