



# 2019 COMPREHENSIVE GANG REDUCTION STRATEGY

City of Jacksonville  
Jacksonville Sheriff's Office  
State Attorney's Office

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Lenny Curry | Mike Williams | Melissa Nelson

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violent crime is an indicator of the overall health and safety of any community. Although the overall crime rate in Jacksonville is down, homicides, aggravated assaults, and other instances of violence increased in 2017. This increase is believed to have been caused, in part, by a small group of offenders made up of young adults and gang affiliates. These gangs, sometimes referred to as “entertainment groups,” consist primarily of young black males between the ages of 16 to 24. Gang affiliation tends to be based in geographic relationships and individuals “move-up” through the ranks of the gang by engaging in violent crime. Unlike the more traditional motivators behind well-established gangs, like the Bloods and Crips, these entertainment groups are not motivated by financial profit, but instead by respect and protecting one’s reputation. One of the predominant ways that these groups communicate is through the production of high-quality rap videos—where they use music to share violent acts and disrespect rival groups. Gang affiliates steal cars and pursue physical altercations with these rivals, sometimes resulting in shootouts or other violent acts of retaliation.

The City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office (JSO), and the State Attorney’s Office (SAO) have each invested significant resources into initiatives to combat violent crime. Developing and implementing a comprehensive strategic plan specifically focused on gang activity and gang violence will undoubtedly lend support to current initiatives. Research in this area reveals that effective gang reduction strategies require a multi-pronged approach, oversight, and initiatives targeting prevention, intervention, and corrections. The development of a cohesive and comprehensive strategy that includes continued communication amongst all stakeholders will enhance the effectiveness of the programs currently directed to fighting crime.

This memo discusses those initiatives currently underway that seek to reduce violent crime in the Jacksonville community and also outlines a series of initiatives or programs that should be considered when developing a comprehensive community-wide gang reduction strategy. Proposed solutions detailed within the memo are focused on prevention, intervention, and suppression of violent crime.\*

Homicides, aggravated assaults, and other instances of violence increased in 2017. This increase is believed to be caused, in part, by a small group of offenders made up of young adults and gang affiliates.

*Unlike more traditional gangs from earlier generations, these groups do not abide by a code of conduct. They lack hierarchal structure and organization. They are not motivated by money. Instead, they are motivated by respect and “street cred” which they earn by making drill videos and shooting rivals.<sup>1</sup>*

We have also identified those concepts and models that present funding and/or advocacy opportunities for community stakeholders to promote and sustain lasting and deeply impactful change for not just this at-risk segment of the population, but the overall health of and safety of greater Jacksonville.

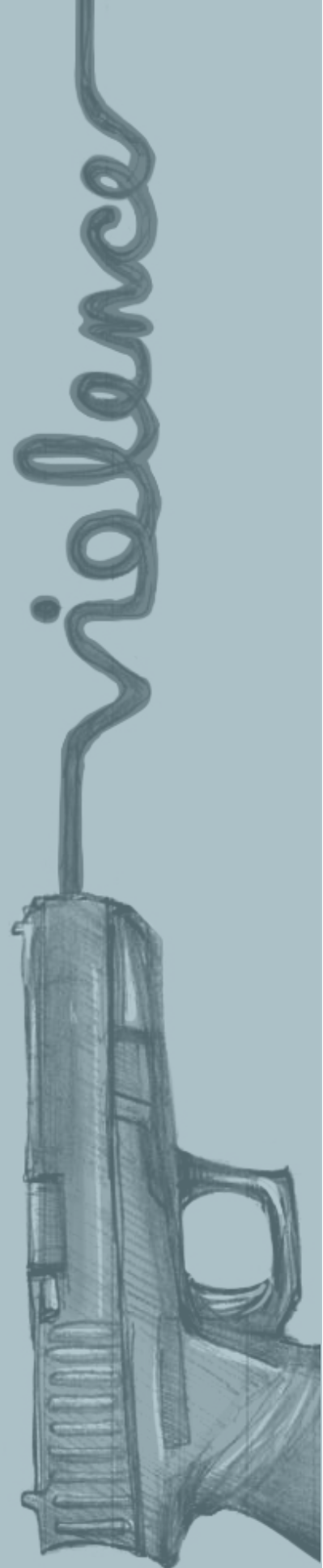
## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Jacksonville has a persistent problem with violent crime. Although overall crime rates have been decreasing in Jacksonville, violent crimes consisting of gun and gang violence perpetrated by a few, select offenders are on the rise. Statistically, the increase in violence is small: in 2017, it was estimated that violent crimes in Jacksonville rose only 1.5%.<sup>2</sup> However, there were more than 100 reported homicides in Duval County alone.<sup>3</sup> In 2018, the homicide rate is generally paralleling 2017, and several recent shootings in our community have garnered national attention.

Jacksonville is not the only city in the United States grappling with issues of violence. Other cities, including Los Angeles, Houston, and Fort Worth, Texas have also experienced an increase in violent crime in recent years.<sup>4</sup> But this increase in violence is not representative of our community values nor is it evidence of neglect on behalf of our leaders. It is instead a problem caused in large part by a small group of juvenile and young adult offenders that our community has been unable to meaningfully engage.

The youth and young adults involved in gangs, sometimes referred to as “entertainment groups,” are responsible for a disproportionate amount of violent crime in Jacksonville. Gang members are typically young, minority men ages 16 to 24, but members are being recruited as young as 12 years-old.<sup>5</sup> Gang members grow up surrounded by a subculture of violence, exposed to poverty, trauma, drugs, and guns. Sadly, attending school is often viewed as a sign of weakness. Cooperation with law enforcement is seen as a punishable offense, even by death. This subculture is their norm and many are not exposed to any other way of life.

These gangs have created their own world through music: they produce “drill music,” music designed to be listened to “on the way to kill or commit



other violent crimes.” Rappers associated with these criminal gangs achieve a certain level of fame online and within their community, and a level of respect and belonging these youth likely believe cannot be achieved through traditional avenues.

Although our community has yet to complete a deep dive into the motives behind this trend, much of the violence between groups is believed to be the result of disrespect and retaliation. Indeed, a review of these drill videos shows exactly this: shootouts initiated because of purported and perceived disrespect; insults directed to opposing gangs “disrespecting” those members who are deceased; and murdered gang members glorified by their images placed on clothing and signs. Violent confrontations spawn from something as simple as an insult or derogatory comment on social media.

In addition to producing music that incites violence, these youth steal cars and weapons, as well as buy and brandish illegally possessed firearms. Some members legally purchase guns or have their parents or friends serve as straw purchasers for them. In addition, stolen automobiles and the reckless use of firearms has made their violence mobile and deadly.

“You have a small number of people —people whose names we know, by the way — who are involved in this kind of activity. While it seems like a huge issue, and it is, it is very complex, it is not something that you can't work on and get your hands around.”

-Sheriff, Mike Williams

### III. NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY

The most successful violence reduction strategies incorporate a multi-pronged approach, engagement with the community, and a comprehensive, coordinated strategy. The topics discussed in this paper integrate the traditional tactics of law enforcement and prosecution with community engagement, rehabilitation, and initiatives designed to prevent the reoccurrence of violence. This strategy is a culmination of initiatives and programs that have been proven effective at reducing gun and gang violence in both Jacksonville and other cities within the United States.

Several initiatives by our current elected leaders are being implemented to improve intelligence gathering, increase surveillance and arrests, and prosecute and manage offenders. Mayor Curry allocated \$2.5 million in the Jacksonville

**Additionally, they incite fear and suppress cooperation with law enforcement by threatening violence and death to anyone who reports information about their crimes.**



Journey budget during his first term and increased funding for the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office to expand anti-crime technology. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office has employed innovative and evidence-based strategies beyond the traditional sphere of enforcement. The State Attorney's Office has dedicated significant prosecutorial resources to support JSO's violent crime initiatives and target dangerous offenders. These initiatives could be enhanced through coordination of prevention and intervention programming, combined with enforcement and suppression efforts and strong community outreach.

Many of the national innovations highlighted below are new, having been developed in light of recent advances in neuroscience, that lead to a deeper understanding of the development of the young adult brain. Other initiatives are more ingrained in the fabric of communities, supported by data and metrics, and have withstood the test of time.

A single strategy cannot be successful on its own; however, not all of these projects are imperative in order to reduce violence in our City. This comprehensive strategy must be viewed as a long-term investment that the community is committed to funding and supporting over many years. The strategies below are included for review and to encourage a broader discussion about the best steps for increasing the overall health and safety of our youth and the greater Jacksonville community.

#### IV. CURRENT AND PENDING INITIATIVES

To fully understand the needs of the community and to develop an effective strategy that leverages existing resources, it is important to review the current state of affairs. A number of projects are already being developed by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, the City of Jacksonville, and the State's Attorney's Office to combat young adult and gang violence within the community. These projects have been carefully selected based upon statistical evidence of efficacy and with consultation of national experts. For example:

*Gang and gun violence is a complex, sociological phenomenon that requires the use of evidence-based programs designed to address the specific needs of a community and the young adults within it.*



- The City has invested significant funds in three state of the art, evidence-based intelligence initiatives to aid law enforcement in the identification and arrest of perpetrators.
- JSO has employed initiatives developed by John Jay College, a national leader in criminal justice and crime analysis, to assist with its mission to prevent gang-related crime.
- The SAO has created a Targeted Prosecution Unit staffed by lawyers dedicated to the prosecution of violent offenders and those who are likely to become violent offenders. The office has also established a community advisory committee to comprehensively review and recommend diversion programming, with an eye toward reducing recidivism.

The discussion that follows is a deeper look at some these initiatives, identifying successes, as well as areas in need of further development.

## **A. Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Initiatives**

### **i. John Jay Initiative**

The JSO and SAO have engaged in a partnership with the National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College. This programming educates law enforcement on the philosophy behind and implementation of the Individual Gun Violence Intervention (IGVI) strategy that reduces gun violence by targeting individual offenders. This IGVI strategy has been employed in Jacksonville: it includes Call-Ins and Custom Notifications, both geared toward intervening in and interrupting violence.

#### **1. Gang Call-Ins**

Individuals who are known to participate in gangs or violent groups are called together to receive a dual message of warning and encouragement. Those who attend are reminded of the laws they are at risk of breaking, given a clear anti-violence message from community leaders and ex-offenders, and then offered community resources and services. These Call-Ins feature an enforcement "hammer" component, warning individuals of the risks of continued negative actions, as well as a "hope" component, pleading with them to make positive choices and offering them services and opportunities. These Call-Ins have been in use for almost two years, and thus far three have been held in Jacksonville. Based on preliminary observation, it appears few of these identified individuals are taking advantage of the services being offered to them.

#### **2. Custom Intervention Notifications**

A small and narrowly focused group of the most violent repeat offenders is investigated

and monitored by the JSO. This custom strategy features a personal visit from the JSO Gang Unit to individuals with known gang involvement. At these notifications, law enforcement clearly communicates that they are aware of the violent actions being committed by the individual and their group and offer them the opportunity to make positive and long-lasting changes. To date, JSO has conducted 262 custom notifications. After completion of the custom intervention notification, 45% of the offenders have called the sheriff's office, and only 20-25% have taken advantage of the services offered.

### 3. Daily "9 P.M. Routine" Social Media PSA Regarding Locking Cars

Over a period of two weeks, from August 16-28, 16 guns were stolen from unlocked vehicles across Jacksonville in 14 days (Aug. 14-28). Presumably, the community is unaware of the danger posed by leaving unsecured guns in cars—both locked and unlocked.<sup>6</sup> In the past five years, there has been a 73% increase in the number of juveniles who are arrested that possess firearms.<sup>7</sup> Many of these guns are being used by youth to commit crimes, either in gang retaliations or in neighborhoods across the city. In an effort to combat this situation, in June 2017, JSO launched a social media strategy to publish daily reminders to lock cars each night at 9:00 p.m. The PSA, called the "9 P.M. Routine," has been picked up and echoed by local media stations as well as the mayor's office.

### 4. "Gun Bounty" Program

The purpose of this program is to use community-based intelligence to track down illegal firearms and get them permanently off the streets. JSO will work with community partners to invest \$250,000 in advertising the effort and will pay \$1,000 from its forfeiture budget for every tip that leads to the successful interdiction of an illegally possessed gun.



were stolen from unlocked cars  
from August 16-28, 2018.<sup>8</sup>



recovered since March 2017  
through the gun bounty  
program.



## **B. City-led Investment in Crime Fighting Technology**

### **i. National Integrated Ballistic Information Network**

The City and JSO have invested in law enforcement's access to the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). NIBIN is an evidence database available to major metropolitan areas through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF). It is the only automatic interstate intelligence resource that allows for the capture and comparison of ballistic evidence. The database contains 3.3 million pieces of evidence and 16 million images. The intelligence gathered through NIBIN helps to solve and prevent violent crimes involving firearms. Since NIBIN's inception in 1999, NIBIN partners have processed approximately 99,000 leads and 110,000 hits.<sup>9</sup>

### **ii. Crime Gun Intelligence Center**

The City, JSO, and SAO have also invested in the creation of a Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC). CGICs are interagency collaborations focused on real-time collection and analysis of intelligence related to firearm-related crimes. The immediate collection of evidence expedites the identification of shooters, disrupts criminal activity, and prevents the perpetuation of violent gun crimes. Forensic evidence is turned into intelligence information on shooters by the CGIC and allows detectives to connect gun-related crimes, improving the identification of offenders and leading to their arrests.

Jacksonville's CGIC is currently being built in the SAO's building and will function as a result of extensive interagency collaboration including ATF, local law enforcement, the SAO, the United States Attorney's Office, crime laboratories, and community partners. This collaboration, when used in combination with evidenced-based enforcement interventions, has been proven to reduce gun violence by providing timely forensic evidence and intelligence for law enforcement and successful prosecution of violent offenders.

### **iii. ShotSpotter ©**

In 2017, Jacksonville implemented and activated ShotSpotter—an innovative gunshot detection system. ShotSpotter is an intelligence platform created to alert police to gunfire in real time, providing officers with "increased tactical awareness" and connecting them to the community. When used as part of a comprehensive gun control strategy, ShotSpotter cities experience a decrease in gun crime and improved community relations.<sup>10</sup>

ShotSpotter is currently being used in more than 90 cities with great success. ShotSpotter cities experience, on average, a 35% reduction of gunfire incidents within the first two years.<sup>11</sup> Police Superintendent of Chicago Eddie Johnson believes that, "[t]he one technology that has made the most difference in Chicago's reduction in gun violence in the last 12 months has been ShotSpotter – it's a game changer."<sup>12</sup>

#### iv. Ballistic Water Tank

The JSO Firearms Laboratory has recently acquired a ballistic water tank that is used to test fire all suitable firearms that are recovered by police officers in the course of their duties. The shell casings from these test fires are then entered into the previously noted (NIBIN) database. This process allows certified firearms examiners at the JSO Firearms Laboratory to match shell casings from crime scenes to the gun that fired them if that gun is later recovered. This match develops both crucial evidence in criminal cases and important intelligence information on active gun criminals in our community.

The NIBIN, ShotSpotter, and JSO Firearms Laboratory processes are synthesized collectively to maximize the tactical attack on gun violence in Jacksonville. The leads produced during these processes will be crucial to the operations of the Crime Gun Intelligence Center.

### C. State Attorney's Office Initiatives

#### i. Targeted Prosecution Unit

Intelligence-driven prosecution focuses the collective resources of a prosecutor's office on one goal: reducing violent crime through timely information sharing and close coordination with law enforcement and community partners. In 2017, the Targeted Prosecution Unit was created with the goal of promoting intelligence-driven prosecution and enhanced support of JSO's violent crime initiatives. Targeted Prosecution is embedded with JSO Gang Unit detectives and Violent Crime Impact Teams to share criminal intelligence. The unit also strategizes the prosecutions of high-priority offenders, including gang-involved juveniles and young adults, and is actively involved in numerous real-time law enforcement initiatives, such as routine citywide deployments.

State Attorney Melissa Nelson recently announced the reorganization of the Targeted Prosecution Unit to further bolster efforts against violent crime. It will now be divided into two divisions: proactive and reactive. The division's proactive group will continue to conduct longer-term investigations, such as the multiyear effort that culminated in the arrests

# 481

shots-fired calls in the service area between 7/28/16 – 7/28/17

# 1,323

shots-fired incidents detected in the same service area with ShotSpotter between 7/28/17-7/28/18

*Intelligence-driven prosecution focuses the collective resources of a prosecutor's office on one goal: reduce crime.*

*Early data is evincing the value of crime-fighting technology.*

of more than 40 individuals in the Rollin' 20s street gang. The reactive group will use every statutory tool available to address the community's most serious, violent offenders and those who use firearms to carry out their crimes. It will work closely with the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, state and federal partners, and the Crime Gun Intelligence Center opening in spring.

## **ii. Development of Arrest Alert System**

An Arrest Alert System is another important part of intelligence-driven prosecution. The launch of an arrest alert system will ensure that those key criminal enablers—the most violent in our city—are appropriately prosecuted regardless of the nature or level of their offense. As part of the SAO's technology budget request for 2019, the office asked the City for funding to develop or purchase an Arrest Alert System. In practice, the Arrest Alert System notifies prosecutors by email of priority arrests involving a specific individual, charge, or arrest location. The City responded with an increase of \$50,000 over last year's funding for this project. Additionally, arrest alerts can also be used to locate uncooperative witnesses and to gather information through debriefings on crimes in specific areas or among specific gang members.

## **iii. Community Prosecution**

In late 2017, the State Attorney's Office formed a steering committee for the exploration, development, and implementation of a Community Prosecution model. In a traditional prosecution program, the role of prosecutors is narrowly focused: assistant state attorneys receive case referrals, file criminal cases, and seek convictions. They rarely engage in prevention, intervention, or community strategies to reduce crime and increase the health of the community.

In a Community Prosecution model, however, prosecutors step outside of the traditional role to engage as problem-solvers in the community. Prosecutors work directly in neighborhoods, develop relationships with local groups, align enforcement priorities with residents' public safety concerns, and seek solutions to prevent crime. Community Prosecution programs have been universally recognized as successful crime-reduction initiatives.<sup>13</sup>

Following a methodology provided by the Center for Court Innovation (CCI), the SAO steering committee began its work by collecting a variety of both crime data and demographic data in the 32209 ZIP code. The consensus of the committee's research is the violent crime problem in Jacksonville in the 32209 ZIP code is worse than in any other part of the city.



Over the last year, the steering committee has met with the New Town Success Zone's Vision Keepers, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the Community Foundation, and attended local listening sessions with constituents. The plan is to assign one or two prosecutors to each zone of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office. Placement within a zone will allow for a community presence and will allow the SAO to continue to study and learn about the specific issues and problems facing citizens in each zone.

In addition to assignments in JSO zones, prosecutors will be assigned to each of the six Citizen Planning Advisory Committees (CPACs), which maintain open and effective communication between residents, businesses, neighborhoods, community organizations, educational institutions, and local government.

#### iv. Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC)

Established and convened by the SAO in 2017, the JJAC is a committee comprising 23 community members with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints who are passionate about youth and juvenile justice issues. The JJAC is tasked with developing a comprehensive, evidence-based strategy uniquely tailored to the Jacksonville community to increase prevention and intervention efforts and reduce recidivism of diverted youth.

Over the course of the past year, subcommittees and members have met regularly to review and discuss best practices in juvenile justice and diversion programming. Through numerous presentations and in consultation with national experts, the subcommittees are currently in the process of drafting their recommendations. A final report is expected to be released in early 2019.<sup>14</sup>

## V. Proposed Solutions

The projects and technological advancements outlined above are promising and serve as a reminder of our community's dedication to solving this problem. However, they are not enough to effectively combat and prevent violence within Jacksonville. A comprehensive review of successful programs in other cities

*“There is not a single solution that is going to fix this problem. It has to be multifaceted, it has to be comprehensive, and it has to be expansive. Law enforcement cannot do it alone. To be successful and enduring, the community must be engaged from our schools to our religious and business communities.”*

-State Attorney  
Melissa Nelson

## CURRENT INITIATIVES OVERVIEW

The City, JSO, and SAO have made significant inroads in identifying and implementing intelligence-based strategies to impact violent crime. They have invested dollars in innovative technologies and databases to improve collaboration, information gathering and preservation, as well as prosecution.

Additionally, these agencies have looked to expand their focus from traditional roles to prevention and intervention programming through community engagement and smart justice practices.

facing similar challenges underscores the importance of two things: (A) the value of a collaborative, comprehensive strategy and (B) the need for focused administrative oversight. Before discussing specific initiatives that have been successful in reducing violent crime, this memo will examine various strategies and administration of these strategies used in other communities that are combatting increases in violent crimes.

## A. Comprehensive Strategy

Cities and governments are executing multiple programs simultaneously to combat crime and looking toward innovation to influence their policies. Whichever comprehensive strategy is crafted, it must be multi-faceted, flexible, and tailored to Jacksonville's community. It should be fully informed by the resources currently available while identifying gaps in services and programming. Two differing types of comprehensive strategies have been used by several cities to reduce youth and gang violence: (i) the Multi-Pronged Approach and (ii) the Public Health Strategy. Both are outlined below.

### i. Multi-Pronged Approach

The cities of Los Angeles, Durham, Palm Beach, and Miami have all adopted similarly structured, multi-pronged strategies that seek to impact violence and reduce gang activity at the individual, family, and community levels. These comprehensive plans are designed to target criminality or violence at each stage of its development. Although the specific, enumerated stages vary slightly in each city, a traditional framework includes: prevention, intervention, and enforcement or prosecution.<sup>15a,b,c</sup> Some cities also include a stage for re-entry. Palm Beach's model includes four components: crime prevention, law enforcement, courts, and corrections as a part of a joint county/city effort.<sup>16</sup>

Each of the cities employing this multi-pronged strategy relies upon community-based partnerships and law enforcement tactics specific to the needs of their city. For example, Los Angeles' Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) employs a four-prong strategy: 1) to increase the community's knowledge and capacity to effectively address gang

**“***We've got a gang member who's bad, and needs to be arrested and prosecuted. There is likely a child 5-, 6-, 7-, 8-, 9-years-old who has been and is being exposed to that. We're good people in Jacksonville, we understand that we have got to wrap our arms around that child, care for that child, and find a better way forward.***”**

-Mayor Lenny Curry

Two differing types of comprehensive strategies have been used by several cities to reduce youth and gang violence: (i) the Multi-Pronged Approach and (ii) the Public Health Strategy.

Strategy as a baseline

Multi-faceted  
vs.  
Public health  
model?



involvement and violence; 2) to increase protective factors and reduce gang joining among at-risk youth between the ages of 10 and 15; 3) to increase pro-social connections and other protective factors for gang-involved young adults between the ages of 14 and 25; and 4) to facilitate effective communication and coordinated responses to address gang violence.<sup>17</sup> GRYD contracts with a number of service providers, including Homeboy Industries, which provides employment opportunities and tattoo removal for formerly gang-involved youth.<sup>18</sup>

This strategy for crime reduction, although still relatively new, has been proven effective. A four-year comprehensive study of Los Angeles' GRYD found that GRYD zones experienced reductions in gang violence. And some targeted hot spots experienced a significant decrease in gang or gun violence.<sup>19</sup> Other initiatives of this comprehensive strategy, such as prevention, are more difficult to measure due to their recent implementation. A long-term study of the effects of these efforts would be helpful in measuring the success of these strategies over time.

## ii. Public Health Strategy

41-73%  
average drop  
in shootings  
and killings<sup>22</sup>  
experienced by  
CureViolence

Other jurisdictions have adopted a public health model to prevent and reduce violence within their communities. According to the CDC, violent behavior, like disease, is transmitted through close contact with others, particularly young adults and teens.<sup>20</sup> Based upon the same strategies used by doctors to treat epidemics like AIDS and tuberculosis, a public health approach to violence works by preventing the transmission of violence within the

community by targeting and treating people with highest risk, and changing community norms that led to and enable violent crime.<sup>21</sup>

## iii. The Two Approaches

Both the multi-pronged approach and public health strategy have been successful in reducing violence. Both approaches attack the issue of violence at the individual and community level, both emphasize the importance of

\$110  
Million

Saved citywide due to  
GRYD gang-related  
crime prevention

185

Amount of gang-related  
violent crimes prevented  
by GRYD Incident  
Response

17.2%

Reduction in  
participation with  
gang-involved violent  
crime

83.4%

Reduction in participation  
with gang-involved violent  
crime

simultaneous intervention and prevention initiatives; both rely upon community engagement to encourage change; and both use existing services or programs to help citizens affected by violence. Either framework, or a combination of the two, could be used to address the current problem of gang violence in Jacksonville.

FUNDING	
Multi-Pronged Approach	Public Health Approach
Funding for the development of a multi-pronged approach to gang reduction may be obtained through several avenues: national grant resources are available through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). <sup>23</sup> opportunities for state and local funding through the Department of Juvenile Justice and Jacksonville's Kids Hope Alliance; seeking partnerships within existing community services; as well as seeking support from private donors.	Funding for the implementation of a public health approach to violence reduction like CureViolence can be achieved through grant funding. CureViolence will conduct site visits and assessments for \$7,500. According to CureViolence, several cities have received OJJDP funding to implement recommendations and findings of those assessments.

*One public health model, CureViolence, has been adopted by a number of municipalities such as New York, Baltimore, Camden, and Kansas City. CureViolence's work has been independently audited and the reduction in violent crime in the geographic area where implemented is remarkable. On average, CureViolence zones experience a 41-73% drop in shootings and killings.<sup>22</sup> In addition; an analysis of New York CureViolence zones conducted by John Jay College found a significant reduction in gun and violent crime, an increase in trust between citizens and law enforcement, and changed perceptions and attitudes of young men about violent behavior.*

## B. Oversight and Administration

The administration of a comprehensive violence reduction plan requires exacting oversight. A strategy similar to those described above will have many moving parts. It requires the creation of multiple programs and initiatives, as well as the collaboration of a variety of community services and agencies. Moreover, many of these initiatives may rely upon similarly situated services or staff, such as case managers, violence interrupters, or mentors. A centralized office could ensure resources are allocated accordingly, duplicated efforts are eliminated, and strategies are adjusted quickly and efficiently. Two opportunities for oversight have been identified based on recent violence initiatives: an (1) Office of Violence Prevention; and a (2) City-controlled center, similar to Los Angeles' GRYD.

## i. Office of Violence Prevention

An Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) is a collaborative office founded upon the premises of public health. An OVP works by providing strategic oversight and direction for communities' efforts to reduce violence.<sup>24</sup> OVPs bring stakeholders, law enforcement, attorneys, and non-profit organizations together to identify and address violence within their community. Several cities have created OVPs with great success, including Philadelphia, Chicago, Stockton, and Milwaukee. OVPs identify a city's specific areas of concern, tailored for the citizens it serves, and select and administer programs specifically targeted to address the issue. For example, one of the Chicago OVP's primary initiatives is to promote resilience within the community after traumatic events have occurred. As such, the OVP has focused on police crisis intervention training, policy development, and community outreach and education. Some other successful programs utilized by OVPs include Operation Cease Fire and peacekeeping initiatives to specifically address gun violence.

There are a number of different models of OVPs that have been studied and evaluated. A comprehensive review identified 11 effective models with 21 potential programs that Jacksonville may wish to consider.<sup>25</sup> OVPs are often located within a city's department of health. Funding may be available through federal or health services grants.

## ii. City-Controlled Center

Similar to an OVP, an office managed by the Mayor or the City manages resources, but retains the authority to identify and address service gaps and adjust programs and initiatives when necessary. Funding for the establishment of a City-controlled office may derive from the same grant resources used to establish violence and gang reduction programs.

## C. Prevention

The adoption of a multi-pronged or public health model to reduce violence demands emphasis on preventing violence from reoccurring in the future. Prevention strategies seek to address the causes of violence and help



*Establishment of an OVP is considered to be a proactive strategy to combat violence. As the eyes and ears of the community, and a community-based office, an OVP can play a fundamental role in not only reducing violence, but preventing it. By identifying youth who are both currently involved in or exposed to violence, an OVP can oversee the provision of services and interventions designed to reduce future involvement in violence.*

change the culture of communities in which it breeds. Areas of improvement often focus upon social services, education, and youth activities. Many of these programs already exist within our community and others could be developed, where appropriate. An oversight office, such as the OVP or city center, could work with community members to identify these services and coordinate their administration more effectively.

Although the full gamut of prevention services is beyond the scope of this memorandum, opportunities have been identified to address the specific needs of the Jacksonville community and its youth.

#### **i. Procurement of Firearms**

As youth-involved gun crimes increase, the troublesome question remains: where are these young offenders getting guns? These youth have stated they “can get a gun anywhere, and that they “don’t even have to buy a gun... it’s as easy to get a gun as it is a bag of Skittles.”<sup>26</sup> Guns are stolen from unlocked cars, bought on the street, traded for drugs and even borrowed from relatives, friends, or fellow gang members.

Proposed solutions include enhancing and expanding JSO’s Communication Strategy related to Firearms in Unlocked Cars/“9 P.M. Routine” into a citywide PSA strategy. This expansion could include PSAs that run during the evening news or sporting events, as well as advertisements on billboards, buses, and benches. Additionally, JSO’s development of a gun bounty program will increase incentives for community cooperation and offer cash rewards for tips about illegal firearms. Thought should be given to the creation of gun bounty or informational programming that is specifically aimed at this youth population through school, neighborhood, and social media messaging.

Centralized  
operations are  
key

Office of  
Violence  
Prevention vs.  
City-Controlled  
Center?



## ii. Prevent Children Related to or Associated with Gang Members from Becoming Gang-Involved

Often, gang members' younger siblings and family members are recruited into the gang at an early age. Even if they are not specifically targeted for membership, many of these youth are exposed to the allure of the gang culture and violence as a result of their older siblings' affiliation.

Drill videos often feature young children, some as young as approximately three or four-years-old. These children are exposed to and traumatized by firearms, violent lyrics, and gunfire from early ages. Many of them are also acquainted with the ideas and ramifications of incarceration and homicide. Sadly, these children often grow up immune to the emotional impact of gun violence in our community.

Early identification of these children could be made through law enforcement intelligence gathered about gang members, and affiliates, as well as after the arrest or prosecution of known gang members. Younger siblings should be engaged and offered trauma-based services to prevent the likelihood that they, too, will become gang-involved. Education needs to be emphasized as an attractive alternative to the "easy life" of criminal gang behavior. Collaboration with public schools, case workers, and community leaders could create the foundation for such prevention efforts.

*One Jacksonville* is a concept designed to prevent gang involvement through the provision of sports and extracurricular activities. This year-round program would be a community-based initiative designed to address issues of juvenile delinquency by utilizing mentors and volunteers who will work with K-12 students to improve academic and social skills, provide positive influences, involve professionals to prepare students for their future, and provide opportunities to participate in sports and recreation. Developed by a JSO gang detective, this initiative contemplates the use of neighborhood parks, community centers, and other designated spaces to help with homework and teach positive socialization, appropriate communication, problem solving, and coping skills.

During the school year, the program will operate as an after-school program when youth are home from school, but unsupervised; and during summer with modified activities and hours of operation. College students will be utilized for their specific disciplines and to build interest in furthering education, and professionals will act as a link to the business community to prepare students for internships and employment opportunities. Elements of the program include



homework assistance, daily reading, discussions, job training skills, finance and investment classes, chess, critical thinking, physical education and sports, computer classes, and coding and robotics classes. Also, during the school year the facilities will be used to address needs of unemployed parents and young adults, such as job training skills, computer classes, cash register operation, ten key typing, résumé writing, and interview skills.

Additionally, this program would assist in providing sports associations for youth who are unable to pay the fees associated with traditional sports teams. Participants will be selected from school tryouts. They will play other teams within the same league, which will consist of regular season games, playoffs, and championships. The hope would be to extend this program to other cities and counties to provide at-risk youth with positive environment options, decreasing the opportunity to become involved in delinquent behaviors, and allowing students to build excitement about high school by preparing them to play high school sports, instilling the possibility of being awarded college scholarships.

Jacksonville is home to some of the finest and most successful youth sports programs in the country, including football, soccer, basketball, baseball, cheerleading, and lacrosse. Creation of a scholarship program with existing, well-established and highly reputable sports programs in the city will provide engagement, education, scholarship, and mentorship opportunities for our youth.



### iii. Explore Collaboration with Trauma Hospitals

Because violence is a complex public health issue, many hospitals are investigating and incorporating strategies to interrupt and prevent cycles of violence within medical communities. As with prosecution, hospitals are not traditionally involved in the realm of violence prevention efforts. But they are the places where victims seek medical treatment and families gather for support.

One example of a successful strategy is the Violence Intervention Program out of Maryland, an intensive hospital-based intervention where victims of violent injury are identified and approached by case workers while they are in the hospital, and asked to join the program and receive services such as assessment, counseling, and social support. Although the initial contact is made during their hospital stay, case workers continue to work with them after discharge to create an individualized action plan to reduce risk factors of repeated violence. The results are promising; in a longitudinal study comparing individuals who were randomized to the program and those who were not, participants had an 83% decrease in repeat hospitalization. Program participants also exhibited a 67% decrease in victimization from violent crime and a 75% reduction in criminal activity.<sup>27</sup>

Additionally, improved collaboration between medical, social, and law enforcement agencies would continue to build upon existing intelligence about where the violence is occurring, the victims of the violence, and social and emotional risk factors.

### iv. Development of a Strong Mentorship Program

Mentoring at-risk youth has exhibited a positive impact on reducing recidivism and increasing pro-social behavior. It is important, however, that mentors spend sufficient time with their mentees and are credible messengers—people who have first-hand knowledge of the neighborhoods and struggles that these youth experience. For at-risk, already criminally-involved youth, the opportunity to receive guidance



from someone within their community who has overcome the same obstacles he has faced is invaluable. Judges and attorneys from the community agree that they would be willing to assign mentors as a condition of a criminal sentence. But there are several roadblocks to meaningful mentoring relationships—including a dearth of male mentors, as well as legislatively imposed restrictions on qualifications.

Although there are already several mentorship programs that exist within Jacksonville, many prohibit at-risk or adjudicated youth from participating in them. Moreover, Florida statutes and the Department of Juvenile Justice's policies on background screening prohibit or make it extremely difficult for people with previous criminal convictions to become mentors or volunteer with youth. These individuals are perhaps the ones that could have the largest impact on at-risk youth, but are required to jump through substantial procedural hoops in order to gain an exemption and be authorized to have contact with youth. To repair the situation, it has been proposed that (A) the legislation and policies governing the employment of mentors be modified to allow people with eligible felony convictions to mentor and (B) an intensive mentorship program be established that is available for at-risk and criminally-involved youth.

Such a mentorship program could be created using community resources and organizations already in existence. To ensure that mentors are able to dedicate sufficient time to their mentees, financial remuneration or incentives could be a powerful recruitment tool. Training to ensure appropriate guidance is given to the youth would be necessary. Participation in the program could come from community referrals of at-risk youth and be assigned as a part of diversion or probation conditions.

*Such a mentorship program could be created using community resources and organizations already in existence.*

**v. Practical Academic Cultural Education (PACE) Center for Girls...for Boys**

PACE Center for Girls is a nationally recognized non-profit organization in Florida that provides non-residential services to at-risk girls ages 12 to 17. PACE programming focuses on prevention,

intervention, and diversion of at-risk, justice-involved girls through the integration of education, career resources, and social services.<sup>28</sup>

PACE's results are promising. In 2016, PACE assisted 2,224 girls, 26% of which had a prior arrest. Within one year of leaving PACE, 91% of participants had no involvement with the criminal justice system. PACE reportedly saves ~\$40,000 per year for each girl that remains out of the juvenile justice system through its program.<sup>29</sup> PACE was founded specifically for at-risk girls. There is a marked absence of—and a great need for—similar programming for boys in our community. If successful, a PACE program for boys would not only reduce violent crime, but generate an enormous cost savings for taxpayers by reducing juvenile incarcerations, which are overwhelmingly male.

In 2017, there were 1,921 juvenile arrests in Jacksonville; approximately 1,600 of those arrests were of boys. Additionally, the evidence is overwhelming that males are almost exclusively responsible for gang-related crime.<sup>30</sup>

PACE Center for Girls is a 501(c)(3) affiliated with the State of Florida's Department of Juvenile Justice. PACE is funded through grants from the United States Department of Justice, Florida's Department of Juvenile Justice, the City of Jacksonville, as well as private donations.

Currently, there is no similar program in the Fourth Circuit to serve boys; a PACE-type program adapted for juvenile males would fill a significant service gap in the Jacksonville community.\*\*

***In 2017, there were  
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*Don't reinvent.  
Replicate what  
works.*



of female PACE participants had no involvement with the criminal justice system within one year of leaving.

Review existing and successful prevention efforts. Cultivate new initiatives based on identified gaps in the community.

## D. Intervention

Across the country a number of different strategies have been developed to interrupt gang violence. In addition to the CureViolence intervention outlined above, which relies on violence interrupters and credible messengers to communicate with gang members to interrupt retaliatory violence, additional potential interventions are outlined below. Many of these initiatives overlap in idea or design, and may be used in conjunction with one another if deemed appropriate. These interventions and programs should be contemplated as only one prong of a more comprehensive strategy, taking into consideration current projects in the pipeline, past successes and failures, and available resources.

### i. Social Media Intervention Strategy

Social media has become integral to lives of youth. Social media has also become a large part of case development for law enforcement monitoring, investigation, and prosecution—particularly for juvenile crimes. In addition to more traditional intervention strategies discussed above, innovative cities are experimenting with online intervention in youth crime through social media.

These social media strategies are new, and effectiveness of reducing violence is still being determined. However, one study of trained E-Responders in New York claims that 97% of their interactions resulted in positive outcomes, such as de-escalated conflicts. In addition to preventing online disputes from escalating to real-life altercations, online interventions are believed to help build empathy, perspective, and other life-skills amongst targeted youth.

As evidenced by the videos produced by Jacksonville's gangs, the online communication of youth criminal activity and gun violence is pervasive within our community.<sup>32</sup> Employing a social media-based intervention strategy similar to New York's may be one

In addition to the CureViolence intervention that relies on violence interrupters and credible messengers to communicate with gang members to interrupt retaliatory violence, additional potential interventions are outlined below.

In New York, "E-Responders" and investigators are surveilling known gang members' social media accounts to collect intelligence and calm online disputes before they turn before into real-life violence. The E-Responders initiative was created by the Citizens Crime Commission of New York City with NYC Cure Violence and researchers at NYU.<sup>31</sup> Responders were trained to prevent the escalation of violence and promote pro-social interactions online.



technique to increase intelligence, reduce the incident of online conflict, and potentially create a culture shift. Such an intervention could be coupled with a greater social media or communications strategy about the City's prioritization of targeting gun and gang violence in addition to more traditional enforcement methods.

Similar to the New York program, a social media intervention strategy could be developed with community partners and managed out of the central control center or OVP. Funding sources for the training of E-Responders and the development of the program would need to be identified.

### **1. Explore and Develop a Counter-Messaging Strategy**

In order to quell violence, the mindsets of our city's youth who are susceptible to gang involvement must be shifted to focus on spreading awareness about the hardship and harrowing reality of gang life, and inspire personal action in the fight to end gang violence.

### **ii. Employ and Deploy a Cadre of Violence Interrupters and Credible Messengers**

As the 2011 documentary *The Interrupters* shows, the individuals delivering the message about curbing violence are as important as the message itself. Recruiting and training those individuals who have firsthand knowledge about neighborhoods, relationships, and gangs are critical to interrupting and stopping violence. These credible messengers are integral to the success of the CureViolence initiative. They have personally experienced—and perhaps grew up in—the same areas of poverty, high crime, and violence. These messengers know how to speak the language of these youth and can relate to them in meaningful and lasting ways. Although several individuals in our community are currently operating in these spaces, we need more. Additionally, these messengers should be fully immersed in and compensated for this work, because they must be available to respond 24 hours a day.

## **E. Suppression through Enforcement and Prosecution**

In addition to prevention services and targeted interventions, Jacksonville's public safety requires a strong strategy of choreographed enforcement and prosecution. Because of the complexities involved in identifying, arresting, and prosecuting gun and gang crimes, increased communication amongst agencies and an emphasis on intelligence gathering is integral to any comprehensive strategy. This plan should include discussions of strategic partnerships between existing units within JSO, SAO, and across other agencies, as well as incorporating innovations in technology.

## i. **Ensure Aggressive Prosecution of Gun Crimes**

Aggressive prosecution of gang-related gun crimes is critical. Currently, the SAO and JSO are working on a coordinated effort to identify and arrest gang and group-involved youth for illegal possession of firearms. The agencies are committed to continuously deploying significant resources to identify and arrest individuals appearing in drill videos who are in illegal possession of firearms.

## ii. **Organized Campaign to Counter Anti-Snitch Culture/Operation Cooperation**

Operation Cooperation is a SAO-led, multi-agency initiative that encourages non-violent offenders to cooperate with law enforcement in return for substantially reduced criminal sanctions. The goal of the initiative is to identify individuals who may possess information critical to investigating and prosecuting violent crime and motivate them to share this information with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

One major obstacle to solving crime is the pervasiveness of “anti-snitch culture.” In gang and group-related crimes, being labeled as a “snitch” can be deadly. Gangs go to extreme measures to not only silence their members, but others who chose to cooperate with law enforcement. As it currently stands, the gang sub-culture ingrains in members of the greater community the idea that cooperation with law enforcement is not tolerated. The SAO is currently developing a strategy to proactively procure gun crime intelligence from the criminal defendants whom the office prosecutes.

In 2018, the SAO and JSO instituted a program called Operation Cooperation. Its aim is to counter “anti-snitch culture” by rewarding witnesses who cooperate with law enforcement and prosecutors. To effectively change this perception, the community must see that cooperating with law enforcement provides tangible rewards and safety even after testimony is complete.

Cooperating with law enforcement can be a life altering experience for a witness. Witnesses may need relocation services or additional support; funding is needed for monetary rewards,

### Intervention

Follow and address violence in the communities in which it breeds. Deploy credible messengers to interrupt violence and invest in long-term solutions.

relocation services, and additional services to convince witnesses to testify against violent offenders and gangs. The pressure within certain areas of our community to not cooperate with law enforcement is intense. Our message about the benefits of cooperation must be of greater intensity in order to have a lasting effect.

### **iii. Enhance Gang Unit Resources**

In order to effectively monitor gangs and gang activity, law enforcement needs a strong Gang Unit. Nationally, similar units that employ more than 100 officers have 55 personnel assigned specifically to gangs.<sup>33</sup> Gangs are always changing how they recruit and commit crimes, including using social media to communicate. For example, it is incredibly important for law enforcement to capture social media posts in real time, because it is common for gang members to post comments about upcoming intended violence or targets and delete them immediately. This time-sensitive intelligence gathering requires more manpower to monitor, document, and pursue leads from social media.

JSO currently fields a six-person gang unit to track overall gang activity in Jacksonville. However, that manpower is frequently supplemented with tactical support from the SWAT Unit and investigative support from both the Homicide and Aggravated Battery Units. Additionally, JSO has assigned an Assistant Chief to head their Group Violence Initiative in partnership with John Jay College and the National Network for Safe Communities. The Assistant Chief is supported by a Lieutenant, two Sergeants, and 16 investigators to specifically investigate gang and group-related violent incidents in Jacksonville. The investigators assigned to this initiative have a group-diversified background with specialties that include Homicide, Aggravated Battery, Narcotics, Gun Crime, and Vice Detectives. This combination allows the unit to investigate any group or gang-related activity, from street level drug dealing to murders.

### **iv. Enhance Communication and Intelligence Sharing**

Communication and intelligence sharing could be enhanced across the spectrum, including efforts between JSO's Auto Burglary and Gang Units; between the School Board Police and the JSO Gang Unit; and between the SAO and JSO Gang Unit.

#### **1. Interagency Database for Long-Term Intelligence Development**

Intelligence development and sharing is critically important to the success of any violence reduction strategy. Currently, much of our data on gang and group development resides

with the law enforcement officers and assistant state attorneys that are most intimately involved in the cases. They personally know the histories of the groups, neighborhoods, and specific individuals who are targets of or who are cooperating with law enforcement efforts. Yet, this important information is lost when a detective is moved to another division, leaves law enforcement, or an ASA leaves the office.

The Brooklyn District Attorney's Office has spent significant resources on developing comprehensive technology that captures this information, organizes it, and helps to create strategies for combatting and anticipating violent crime. Similar technology would be invaluable to the detectives, crime and data analysts, and prosecutors who work with these populations.


## **2. Placing an Assistant State Attorney within the JSO Gang Unit & Violent Crime Impact Team**

The recently announced expansion of the SAO Targeted Prosecution Unit will allow for greater daily communication between the State Attorney's Office and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office.

### **v. Gang Injunctions**

Gang injunctions have been used successfully in Los Angeles, California to disrupt gang activity and affiliation since the 1990s.<sup>34</sup> Gang injunctions are civil restraining orders against a gang that prohibit members from engaging in nuisance behaviors believed to be gang-related, such as wearing a gang's colors. Law enforcement and prosecutors decide which members to enforce the injunction against, providing them with an opportunity to strategically target and prosecute individuals for violations of the injunction that require a lower standard of proof than criminal proceedings.<sup>35</sup>

Gang injunctions can only be sought when there is clear and convincing evidence an individual is a member of a street gang, engaged in an eligible nuisance activity within a designated area, and there is substantial reason to conclude that the injunction is likely to stop the behavior.<sup>36</sup>



***Gang injunctions have been used successfully in Los Angeles to disrupt gang activity and affiliation since the 1990s.***



Provisions of a gang injunction must be narrowly tailored, but standard provisions prohibit the association with other identified gang members, enforce curfew requirements, place prohibitions on the consumption of drugs or alcohol, and restrictions on the possession of firearms or other weapons.<sup>37</sup> A person violating a provision of a gang injunction may be prosecuted for contempt and sentenced to 60 days or more in jail.<sup>38</sup> Probation, victim restitutions, and referral to federal immigration authorities are additional remedies that may be pursued.<sup>39</sup>

Under the leadership of the Mayor and General Counsel's Office, Jacksonville may consider using gang injunctions as a part of their strategy to reduce violent crime. Because Jacksonville's gangs are geographically based, the use of injunctions may provide law enforcement the opportunity to target these areas for nuisance crime and prevent escalation into more serious offenses. However, the development of this strategy would require coordination across law enforcement and the courts.

#### **vi. Prohibition of Identified Gang Members' Possession of Firearms**

Newly enacted state legislation presents an opportunity for law enforcement to identify and prosecute selected gang-affiliated individuals carrying firearms in Jacksonville. This statute is similar to those governing domestic violence injunctions.

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and the State Attorney's Office are currently evaluating the use of Risk Protection Orders for this purpose. The Risk Protection Order Act was created by 790.401, Florida Statutes, during the 2018 Florida legislative session.

While many gang members have prior felony or juvenile adjudications that prohibit firearm possession, many younger or new members do not. This injunction process would provide law enforcement the opportunity to arrest and prosecute all gang members in violation of the injunction, which may require a lower standard of evidence or a less intensive factual investigation.

### **F. Corrections and Courts**

Management of gang members after arrest and within the justice system is an issue of national discussion. Using the judicial and correctional systems as tools to address root causes of the criminal behavior and change behavior is a concept that has taken root in some jurisdictions.



Two potential concepts are outlined below: (1) the development of a Young Adult Court and (2) the creation of a Youth Boot Camp.

### **i. Young Adult Court (YAC)**

Treatment or problem-solving courts have been recognized as an effective strategy to reduce recidivism amongst special populations. Treatment courts addressing substance abuse, prostitution, and truancy proved effective at reducing recidivism. Some have recently begun Young Adult or Gang Courts across the nation. Six young adult courts have been established, each with unique strengths and weaknesses. However, two models are worth mentioning here: (1) Gang Courts I TX and (2) the San Francisco model.

An addendum to this memorandum more fully sets forth the concept of a Young Adult Court and how implementation in Jacksonville would be most effective. A YAC allows for a spectrum of creative sentencing options. State Attorney Nelson, Chief Judge Mahon, and Sheriff Williams have all committed their support to this endeavor, which would require significant resources. These resources could be obtained through a federal grant, private donors, or other state and local opportunities.

### **ii. Youth Boot Camp**

Youth boot camps have been used as a means of corrections for decades. Designs and efficacy of programs vary dramatically, but traditionally, are divided into three types: (1) military/drill style; (2) rehabilitative style; and (3) educational/vocational models.<sup>40</sup> The use of youth boot camps is controversial and studies have found mixed results about their efficacy.<sup>41</sup>

In Florida, a Miami-Dade Correctional Bootcamp has significant public support and attention after being included in a 2017 HBO Documentary featuring Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, entitled *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*.<sup>42</sup> The boot camp is accredited by the American Correctional Association and relies upon a paramilitary setting that integrates educational, vocational, and rehabilitative services into a “Shock Incarceration Setting.”<sup>43</sup> Participants include convicted offenders ages 14 to 22 who have been adjudicated as adults.

Suppression and Enforcement

Comprehensive technology and intelligence, as well as aggressive, targeted prosecution of the most violent offenders, are integral to combatting violent crime.

A boot camp in Jacksonville for young males convicted of certain crimes is one program that may be considered by the City. Because there are mixed reviews about the general efficacy of such programs, additional research into more specific models is necessary. Research about funding is also required.<sup>44</sup>

## Courts and Corrections

Research shows that alternatives to the traditional justice system can be an effective way to intensively engage with and redirect violent offenders.

### G. Opportunities for the Private and Business Communities

Jacksonville is on the verge of an incredible transformation. With the exciting and ongoing redevelopment of the downtown area, as well as the announcement of the relocation of several major companies to the Jacksonville community, we are poised to experience incredible growth. This transformation cannot reach its full potential, however, unless citizens and businesses in our community feel safe and are included in the discussion of violence reducing strategies. Guidance and assistance from stakeholders and business owners is critical to identifying, developing, and effectively executing comprehensive violence reduction. In addition, the business community can help support success of this strategy through advocacy and funding.

#### i. Advocacy

There are two areas in need of strong community support and advocacy: (1) support for a Young Adult Court; and (2) lifting restrictions placed on potential mentors and volunteers with previous felony convictions.

*There are two areas in need of strong community support and advocacy: (1) support for a Young Adult Court; and (2) lifting restrictions placed on potential mentors and volunteers with previous felony convictions.*

##### 1. Support for a Young Adult Court

First, support from community leaders and business owners is necessary to the creation and success of a Young Adult Court in Jacksonville. These courts are new and may not receive immediate support from citizens. As demonstrated by the success of our other diversion programs, problem solving courts are proven to be effective at reducing crime and can pose significant savings to taxpayers.

##### 2. Lift Restrictions Placed Potential Members and Volunteers with Previous Criminal Conviction Records

Florida severely limits the employment of mentors or volunteers who have a criminal conviction. Although §985.644(1)(b) and §984.01(2)(a) Florida statues do not require screening for volunteers who assist on an "intermittent basis"

## Community Engagement

Partnerships with the business community, including professional sports teams, are essential to identifying and funding programs that make our community stronger and safer.

for fewer than 10 hours per month, an impactful mentorship program will certainly need to consist of more than 2.4 hours of interaction per week. All DJJ employees—including volunteers and mentors—are required to pass Level 2 screening standards, established in section 435.04, as a condition of pre-employment. These restrictions bar people who are arguably most suited to mentor at-risk youth from doing so.

Section 435.07 and DJJ policy 1800PC do, however, allow for exemptions from employment disqualification. As laid out in §435.07(1)(a), people with eligible felony convictions for which more than three years have passed; misdemeanors of completed adjudication; or findings of delinquency, who have demonstrated “clear and convincing evidence of rehabilitation” may apply to

serve at the agency’s discretion. However, the additional specifications and requirements are extremely prohibitive, requiring DJJ agency head approval and additional documentation, and discretion is rarely exercised.

Reducing the statutory barriers to permit people with felony convictions to mentor would allow Jacksonville to create a strong and effective mentorship program for at-risk youth and criminally adjudicated youth.

### ii. Funding Opportunities for Professional Sports Partnerships

In order to initiate a truly comprehensive and dynamic strategy to reduce violence, any of the initiatives or programs previously discussed could benefit from private funding.

At-risk youth may greatly benefit from advocacy and programs established by Jacksonville’s professional sporting community. Our city enjoys the presence of the National Football League’s Jacksonville Jaguars, as well as the Jumbo Shrimp minor league baseball team, the Giants basketball team, and the Armada Soccer FC team. At-risk youth are some of the most enthusiastic sports fans and talented athletes in our community, and research shows that youth learn important leadership and lifeskills through participation in team sports.

Professional and semi-professional athletes and teams frequently work with at-risk youth. The Jaguars have been especially generous with their resources by demonstrating a commitment to the development of a number of youth programs, including a \$500,000 scholarship fund with The University of North Florida for inner city high school students, an anti-tobacco campaign, and the charitable donation of more than \$400,000 in tickets.<sup>45</sup>

Additionally, athletes and coaches are collaborating to use their influence in policy-making and community-wide criminal justice efforts. In Los Angeles, NFL coach Pete Carroll opened non-profit organization “A Better L.A.” in 2010 to combat gang violence. A Better L.A. funds many community-based programs seeking to prevent violence and intervene in potential future violence.<sup>46</sup> In Chicago five sports teams, including the Chicago Bears, have formed the Chicago Sports Alliance, a group working closely with academics in Chicago to target youth and gang-related violence.<sup>47</sup> Armed with empirical evidence provided by the Urban Labs, the teams working together have agreed to provide one-time grants to two evidence-based programs: (1) a high intensity mentoring and trauma therapy program for youth; and (2) Chicago Police analyst training to be embedded into the city’s most violent areas to collect data and develop city-specific crime reduction strategies. In addition, the alliance is providing grant funding to the University of Chicago’s Urban Labs to measure and assess the success of these programs and the teams’ investments.<sup>48</sup>

Members of criminal gangs often show little concern for their own well-being. Simply put, many do not care whether they live or die young. As a result, they place little value on human life, often treating it as a commodity to be traded amongst criminal gangs. Continuing the tradition between the cross-section of professional sports and community advocacy, Jacksonville’s sports community may consider spearheading select violent crime reduction initiatives—similar to the Chicago Bears exchange of game tickets for firearms—or directly engaging in and funding programs directed at curbing the reduction of violent crime.

This Comprehensive Gang Reduction Strategy was prepared by the City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, and the State Attorney’s Office to facilitate community-wide discussion regarding gang and gun violence reduction for greater Jacksonville, Florida. The items and suggestions contained within are derived from a number of resources, including city government officials, law enforcement, prosecutors, empirical and legal research, and studies of strategies and programs employed in other cities that have faced similar issues with gang and gun violence.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Examples of drill videos created by local gangs can be found at: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=dyhtgRzg70k>; <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=-JkRCxKIDNc>; <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=QjZGBMx8EzI>; [https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=uwd4b\\_plPrl](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=uwd4b_plPrl).

<sup>2</sup> Mock, Brentin, The Truth About Violent Crime in America's Cities, CityLab.com (Dec. 21, 2017), <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/12/telling-the-truth-about-crime-in-americas-cities/548930/>

<sup>3</sup> Florida Department of Law Enforcement, 2018. Crime in Florida, 2017. Florida uniform crime report [Computer program]. Tallahassee, FL: FDLE

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/77956/2000622-Evaluation-of-the-Los-Angeles-Gang-Reduction-and-Youth-Development-Program-Year-4-Evaluation-Report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Waugh, Jennifer, Gangs in Jax: How they operate, who is joining, News4Jax (April 27, 2015), <https://www.news4jax.com/news/local/gangs-in-jax-how-they-operate-who-is-joining>

<sup>6</sup> §790.174 Florida statue requires the safe storage of firearms. Any person who fails to store or leave a loaded firearm in the require manor...[a]nd or a result a minor gains access to the firearm" commits a misdemeanor of the second degree.

<sup>7</sup> Duvall, Tessa. Where do kids get guns? Inmates reveal how easy it is (Sept. 02, 2018). <https://apnews.com/3011b3d3ba014d21a66c1b6eea48120d/Where-do-children-get-guns?-Inmates-reveal-how-easy-it-is>

<sup>8</sup> Information provided by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.atf.gov/resource-center/fact-sheet/fact-sheet-national-integrated-ballistic-information-network>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.shotspotter.com/system/content/uploads/SST-ElectedOfficials-DatasheetFAe.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> For additional statistics, see <https://www.shotspotter.com/results/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.shotspotter.com>

<sup>13</sup> Miles, Thomas J., University of Chicago Crime Lab, Does the "Community Prosecution" Strategy Reduce Crime? A Test of Chicago's Experience, American Law and Economics Review, August 2013. <https://academic.oup.com/aler/article/16/1/117/135028>

<sup>14</sup> Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC), Office of the State Attorney for the Fourth Judicial Circuit, <https://www.sao4th.com/about/programs-and-initiatives/juvenile-justice/juvenile-justice-advisory-committee-jjac/>

<sup>15a</sup> See Gang Reduction Strategy, Durham County Inc., <http://www.dconc.gov/government/departments-a-e/criminal-justice-resource-center/youth-services/gang-reduction-strategy>; <sup>15b</sup>The City of Los Angeles Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD), <http://www.juvenilejusticeresearch.com/taxonomy/term/3>; <sup>15c</sup>Gang Reduction Program, Miami Matters, <http://www.miamidadematters.org/promiseppractice/index/view?pid=3186>; and

<sup>16</sup> Palm Beach County Youth Violence Reduction Project: Phase II, Center for Criminology and Public Policy Research, <http://criminology.fsu.edu/center-for-criminology-public-policy-research/completed-projects/palm-beach-county-youth-violence-reduction-project-phase-ii/>

<sup>17</sup> Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti & Mayor's Office of Public Safety "Gang Reduction & Youth Development (GRYD)" Impact Summary

<sup>18</sup> Chan et al., The GRYD and Probation Juvenile Reentry Program Evaluation, 5-6 (Dec. 2016), [http://www.juvenilejusticeresearch.com/docs/GRYD\\_Probation%20Juvenile%20Reentry%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf](http://www.juvenilejusticeresearch.com/docs/GRYD_Probation%20Juvenile%20Reentry%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> This study was conducted in 2015. It is important to note that statistically, although there was a decline in the area, zones that did not employ the GRYD also saw a reduction in crime. The study provides a more comprehensive evaluation of each of the four areas of focus of GRYD and in 2017, more up-to-date evaluations of each area were conducted. Some areas and programs appear to be more effective than others. The reports can be found here: <http://www.juvenilejusticeresearch.com/taxonomy/term/3>.

<sup>20</sup> <https://tedmed.com/talks/show?id=75793>.

<sup>21</sup> <http://cureviolence.org/the-model/essential-elements/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://cureviolence.org/results/scientific-evaluations/>

<sup>23</sup> See Apply Now: Gang Suppression Planning Grants Program, <https://csgjusticecenter.org/law-enforcement/announcements/apply-now-gang-suppression-planning-grants-program/>

<sup>24</sup> Milwaukee Health Department, Violence Prevention Mission, <https://city.milwaukee.gov/health/staysafe#.W4wPIS2ZOuU>

<sup>25</sup> Blueprints for Violence Prevention (ADD. 2)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.apnews.com/3011b3d3ba014d21a66c1b6eea48120d>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.hpoe.org/Reports-HPOE/2015/2015-violence-prevention.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> PACE, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Youth Programs, <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/services/prevention/youthprograms>

<sup>29</sup> PACE Center for Girls, Inc., Fast Facts: <https://www.pacecenter.org/locations/jacksonville/117-fast-facts-about-pace-jacksonville>

<sup>30</sup> OJJDP: Gang Suppression and Intervention: Problem and Response: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/gangprob.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> Citizens Crime Commission of New York City, Initiative: E-Responders, <http://www.nycrimecommission.org/e-responder.php>

<sup>32</sup> Friedrich, Michael, The Mean Tweets of New York, CityLab.com (Mar. 19, 2017), <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/03/the-mean-tweets-of-new-york/520077/>

<sup>33</sup> Brian A. Reaves, PhD., Police Departments, 2013: Personnel, Policies, and Practices, U.S. Dep't of Justice (May 2015), at 9, T10. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/lpd13ppp.pdf>



<sup>34</sup> Ridgeway, et al., Effect of Gang Injunctions on Crime: A Study of Los Angeles from 1988 – 2011, Working Paper 2018-3.0, University of Pennsylvania Department of Criminology, <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/1659b01b0005a18e?projector=1&messagePartId=0.5>. An ongoing study of the efficacy of the use of gang injunctions in Los Angeles from 1993 to 2013 found a 5% decrease in short-term crime and a reduction of 18% in the long-term. Since their creation, the Los Angeles County Attorney has successfully sought 46 gang injunctions, effectively covering 22% of the county's area. Other California cities, including San Francisco, Long Beach, and Oakland, have also used gang injunctions as a strategy to reduce gang crime.

<sup>35</sup> Queally, James. Los Angeles barred from enforcing nearly all gang injunctions, federal judge rules, Los Angeles Times (Mar. 18, 2018), <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-gang-injunction-court-order-20180315-story.html>. Gang injunctions are controversial. A federal court recently ruled that the manner in which Los Angeles courts issued gang injunctions prior to January, 2018, without providing defendants an opportunity to challenge the restraining orders in court, violated defendants' due process rights. However, the ruling did not prohibit the use of gang injunctions more generally and with proper procedural safeguards in place, they may continue to be used by law enforcement.

<sup>36</sup> Basic Requirements, p. 8 – 9.

<sup>37</sup> Id., at 12.

<sup>38</sup> Id., at 15.

<sup>39</sup> Id., at 20-21.

<sup>40</sup> CrimeSolutions.gov, Practice Profile: Juvenile Boot Camps, <https://www.crimesolutions.gov/PracticeDetails.aspx?ID=6>

<sup>41</sup> A 2008 meta-analysis of data from 32 studies found that there was not a statistically significant reduction in recidivism of boot camp participants compared to non-boot camp participants. Another study has found an increase in recidivism by boot camp participants. Id.

<sup>42</sup> Hanks, Douglas, Miami's young criminals face Boot Camp – plus HBO cameras and the Rock, the Miami Herald (March 26, 2017), <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article140905753.html>

<sup>43</sup> Bootcamp, Miami-Dade County, <https://www8.miamidade.gov/departments/corrections/boot-camp.page>

<sup>44</sup> For example, the Department of Juvenile Justice is prohibited from funding any boot camp style program. See Practice Profile: Juvenile Boot Camps, National Institute for Justice, <https://www.crimesolutions.gov/PracticeDetails.aspx?ID=6>.

<sup>45</sup> Sports Philanthropy, Jacksonville Jaguars, <http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Spring02/Parish/dream-weaver/JAGSPHILANTHROPY.htm>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.abetterla.org/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/projects/chicago-sports-alliance>

<sup>48</sup> Sports Franchises Team Up to Address Violence, UChicago Urban Labs, <https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/projects/chicago-sports-alliance>

\*Re-entry, while a very important component to public safety, is not discussed in this memorandum.

\*\*It is important to note that there are a number of successful programs providing services to both boys and girls in Northeast Florida. The PACE model highlighted in this paper is just one example of a program at the scale and funding level needed in the greater Jacksonville community for similarly aged males. PACE is named because of its evidence-based and data-supported success as an intervention for high risk, justice-involved girls. Because approximately 80% of the juveniles arrested in 2017 were boys, it is important that we identify and implement similar programming specifically cultivated for this overwhelmingly male population.

### **Content Attributions:**

The City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, the Kids Hope Alliance, and the Fourth Circuit State Attorney's Office

### **Special Thanks to:**

Columbia Law School Intern Jennifer Sharpe

Assistant State Attorney London Kite

Assistant State Attorney Laura Lambert

Assistant State Attorney Matt O'Keefe

JSO Strategic Planning Executive Marlo Zarka

JSO Detective Greg Howard

JSO Director of Investigation and Homeland Security Ronald Lendvay

SAO Employees Linzee Ott and Shea Blair