



Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)

RTI International has conducted research on crime, violence, justice systems, and behavioral health for over 30 years. Using rigorous multidisciplinary approaches, RTI research advances knowledge and informs policy, practice, and programs nationally and internationally.

Professional backgrounds of RTI researchers span a wide variety of disciplines including criminology, economics, law, psychology, public health, and sociology. Crime, violence, and justice staff are located in RTI's main office in Research Triangle Park, NC, and in offices throughout the United States. RTI maintains a presence in Washington, DC, for consultation on crime, violence, justice, and behavioral health topics.

Overview

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is a U.S. Department of Justice-funded initiative that seeks to reduce gun violence by improving strategic coordination across federal, state, and local agencies in each of the 94 U.S. federal judicial districts. With a commitment of over \$900 million by the federal government for this project, the success of PSN will ultimately be determined by the ability of federal, state, and local agencies to work effectively together. A major component of PSN is the integration of local research partners who help to identify the most pressing issues related to local gun violence. This includes the geographical concentration of particular types of gun violence in specific neighborhoods, as well as the identification of offenders responsible for a high percentage of gun-related incidents. This information can then be used to target PSN enforcement and prevention efforts.

RTI serves as the PSN research partner for the Eastern District of North Carolina (EDNC), working with the U.S. Attorney's office, local police and sheriff's departments, district attorneys' offices, and community violence prevention groups. In this capacity, RTI collects and analyzes firearm-related data to gain an improved understanding of gun violence in communities such as Raleigh, Wilmington, Greenville, and Fayetteville. Using geographic information systems and other analytical techniques, RTI provides regular briefings to the PSN task force, highlighting key elements of gun violence and changes in specific forms of gun-related violence over time. The research partner is also tasked with evaluating the effectiveness of various PSN strategies to prevent



gun-related violence that were implemented across the EDNC. RTI is working with local PSN sites to track the effectiveness of local community call-ins that seek to integrate community service providers with high-risk probationers. Findings indicate that, of the 205 offenders who have participated in Fayetteville Project Ceasefire call-ins beginning in June 2002, 10% were reincarcerated (n=20), half for technical violations. Very few offenders participating in the call-ins re-offended with a gun violation. Overall, only three offenders who participated in a call-in have committed subsequent gun violations.

Since the inception of PSN, gun-related crime has declined substantially across all the core EDNC sites. From 2002 to 2004 alone, gun violence dropped in each of the four core PSN sites: Raleigh (-5%), Wilmington (-18%), Greenville (-15%), and Fayetteville (-27%). Many of these trends continued into 2005. In addition, more guns are being taken off the street as the result of PSN. In Raleigh, gun seizures increased 50% between 2001 and 2004. In Wilmington, gun seizures were up 77% between 2001 and 2004 and were on pace to increase again in 2005. RTI continues to work together with PSN sites to monitor and evaluate these local trends.

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