Gun Violence Reduction Strategies for Youth
A Review

Introduction: The programs and policies listed below represent well known or model programs within each of the identified areas. The review is not an exhaustive list of all programs that may fall within each of these categories. The categories, however, cover the range of approaches to youthful gun violence as identified in this review of the literature.

Enhanced Sentences


Meta-Analysis of Firearm Violence Strategies

A review of 47 studies evaluating the effect of strategies to reduce gun violence at a community level (measuring overall crime level drops, not individual level recidivism), found that community law enforcement strategies (e.g., policing, probation, and community programs) were the most effective in reducing crime rates as compared to gun buy back programs and harsher gun laws. Among the strategies listed under community law enforcement, harsher prosecution of existing gun laws was the least effective method, while community programs and enhanced probation were the most effective. Programs that were multidimensional by including more than one community strategy were the most effective overall in reducing gun violence (Makarios & Pratt, 2012).

Gun Court

Jefferson County, Alabama, instituted a gun court for youth, first time gun offenders. The court a wraparound approach to treatment which included a boot camp (28 day), drug/alcohol treatment, intensive supervision/aftercare and parents were required to attend counseling sessions. Prior to the program, law enforcement would not arrest a youth for gun possession, but with the court in place, officers arrest youth for all gun-related offenses. Evaluators compared youth who participated in intensive supervision, those who participated in nonintensive supervision and those who did not participate in the program. Youth in the nonintensive supervision condition successfully completed alcohol/drug use at higher rates and had stricter curfews than the other groups. Results indicated that youth in the intensive supervision condition had lower recidivism rates.
(17%) when compared to nonintensive supervision (37%) and the comparison conditions (40%). The length of recidivism was not available in the report.

**Intensive Probation**


Alive at 25 supports two key strategies: 1) constant, close probation supervision; 2) providing services for education support, job skills, drug treatment and counseling for youth and parents. These are administered by probation officers, police and mentors. Street mentors are typically in their early 20/30’s and usually grew up in the same police district. They meet with youth at least 24 times each month. Probation officers have weekly format meetings and try to see youth at least three times a week on an informal basis. Using citywide data, youth homicides dropped after the program was implemented.

**Prevention, Intervention, Suppression**


Operation Eiger, Baton Rouge has three linked prevention, intervention and suppression strategies. Suppression (law enforcement to seize illegal firearms and prosecute gun crimes), Intervention (assessment and treatment of youth) and Prevention (at risk youth informational sessions, life skills training). Recidivism rates compared favorably to a comparison groups: 43% for the intervention condition and 72% for no intervention although this data was inconclusive when youth were matched on demographics and criminal history. A time series analysis of areawide crime statistics supported positive effects for the program: the average number of firearm robberies decreased by 16% in three years following program start.

http://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/SPT/Programs/40

**Ceasefire and Pulling Levers**


“Pulling Levers” approach, problem-oriented policing. The pulling levers approach includes the following elements: 1) select a particular crime problem, such a gun homicide; 2) convene an interagency working group of law enforcement practitioners; 3) conduct local research to identify key offenders, groups and behavior patterns; 4) frame a response to offenders that uses a varied menu including social services/community resources, and directly and repeatedly communicating with offenders to make them understand why they are receiving special attention. Initial approach developed in Boston (Ceasefire), subsequent replications in Indianapolis and Chicago and Stockton CA, all were associated with significant decreases in homicide. Roehl et al., 2005, 10 other sites have also used this method to effectively decrease gun violence.

*In contrast to broad-based “zero tolerance” policing initiatives that attempt to prevent serious offending by indiscriminately cracking down on minor crimes committed by all offenders, the pulling levers deterrence strategy seeks to control violence by focusing on particular groups that*
were behaving violently, subjecting them to a range of discretionary criminal justice system action, and directly communicating this message to a very narrow and specific audience.’ Braga 2008

**Gang Intervention**


1) Intensive and targeted police work (gang unit) works closely with community
2) Targeted outreach to gang-related and families. Informational sessions, linking to services.
3) Education for parents and community members
4) Expand services available for gang-related and at-risk youth and families (counseling, substance abuse treatment), cool down gang-related situations,

Pre and post data (without controls) show significant drop in homicides (no homicides in three years among Latino gangs, the focus of the intervention compared to an average of 3.5 in the 2002/2003).

**OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model (OJJDP, 2010).**

OJJDP’s comprehensive model is a community mobilization effort that begins with a needs assessment, identifies key community leaders/outreach workers and law enforcement, and selects program activities covering 1) Intervention, 2) Prevention and 3) Suppression/Social Control (this definition of suppression relates to close supervision and monitoring, a targeted information campaign and quick responses to gun violence. It does not include harsher sentences for gun offenses).