



Leveraging Research and Philanthropy to Reduce Crime and Violence in the Mississippi Delta

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Preface

In fall 2017, the Walton Family Foundation requested that the RAND Corporation perform research to help the foundation’s understanding of how to use philanthropy to positively impact public safety in Phillips County, Arkansas and Coahoma County, Mississippi. Specifically, foundation members were interested in (1) the current state of criminal activity and public safety, as well as the experiences and priorities of the community residents; (2) the institutional challenges and unmet needs of the local criminal justice systems agencies; (3) the variability of crime across the counties; (4) which best practices and approaches could help improve safety in the counties; and (5) research-based recommendations for how the Walton Family Foundation could improve public safety. We developed a project to address these questions and conducted research and analysis between fall 2017 and spring 2018. This research report describes both the methods and findings of the research to help the Walton Family Foundation develop its public safety funding strategy for these counties.

The research reported here was conducted through the RAND Justice Policy Program, which spans both criminal and civil justice systems issues with such topics as public safety, effective policing, police–community relations, drug policy and enforcement, corrections policy, use of technology in law enforcement, tort reform, catastrophe and mass-injury compensation, court resourcing, and insurance regulation. Program research is supported by government agencies, foundations, and the private sector.

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Questions or comments about this report should be sent to the project leader, Jessica Saunders (jrsaunders@rand.org). For more information about RAND Justice Policy, see www.rand.org/jie/justice-policy or contact the director at justice@rand.org.

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Summary

This report explores how foundations approach funding public safety projects, focusing on two counties (Phillips County, Arkansas, and Coahoma County, Mississippi) in the Mississippi Delta at the direction of the Walton Family Foundation.¹ Researchers from the RAND Corporation conducted a needs assessment of the affected communities, identified and reviewed evidence-based strategies for addressing community problems, and provided a road map for developing a comprehensive public safety strategy for these counties.

The project began with interviews with representatives of peer philanthropic foundations to learn how these foundations approach community public safety, make funding decisions, and measure their impact; in addition, interviewers gathered advice on working as a newcomer to public safety projects. We also conducted a needs assessment of the priority counties to understand specific crime problems and their causes and correlates. We conducted multiple site visits, dozens of interviews, and two focus groups in each community and reviewed available crime data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and local police departments. Next, we searched the research literature to identify a variety of evidence-based approaches to reducing crime, violence, and its causes and correlates that match the needs identified in the Mississippi Delta. The project concluded with the development of a framework for how to think through the various options for selecting and implementing community-level violence prevention and intervention.

The findings of this work are organized by these research questions:

1. How are foundations funding crime and violence reduction?
2. What are the crime and violence problems in the Mississippi Delta, and what is causing them?
3. What are some research-based approaches to addressing the specific problems identified in the Mississippi Delta?
4. How can the community develop and implement a comprehensive public safety strategy?

How Are Foundations Involved in Community Crime and Violence Reduction?

Philanthropic foundations with criminal justice grantmaking strategies believe they can make significant reforms to the justice system and improve the lives of individuals affected by crime and the criminal justice system. While there are several foundations with long histories of

¹ Not to be confused with the Mississippi River Delta. The *Mississippi Delta* is defined as the area that lies in the shared floodplains of the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers. It has a unique cultural connotation, based on its racial, agricultural, and musical history.

criminal justice funding, much of the recent momentum comes from a recognition that the ability of governmental institutions to reform and innovate is limited. This is most evident for issues that exist in the government domain and have persisted for years (e.g., mass incarceration, gun violence).

The funding landscape is growing in terms of the number of funders, many of whom are eager to work with other foundations to share and build effective strategies to make the most of their resources. Regardless of the chosen grantmaking area, having a strategic plan that includes knowledge sharing with other funders and community representatives is essential. The length and nature of funding approaches is beholden to the preferences of the foundation and the approach that is most likely to work with its chosen strategy. The planning process will ideally lead to significant impact, but there should be an understanding of what impact looks like as well. Many foundations (and their boards) struggle with this, and monitoring impact throughout the process might prevent these problems. Building in formal processes or routine check-ins to assess external factors (e.g., politics, power dynamics, racial and economic justice) might help maintain awareness.

What Are the Crime Problems in the Mississippi Delta and What Are Their Causes?

The crime and violence rates in the two most populous cities in the region, Helena-West Helena (Phillips County) and Clarksdale (Coahoma County), are significantly higher than in their surrounding areas. Official law enforcement crime statistics for these areas are not readily available, but CDC data illustrate the higher crime rates there than in other areas: There were 2.9 and 3.5 homicides per 10,000 residents in Phillips and Coahoma Counties, respectively, while the U.S. average was 0.7 per 10,000 (CDC, 2018). Discussions of crime and violence revealed that these communities experience a great deal of violent and property crime, which significantly and negatively impacts many aspects of residents' quality of life.

When asked about the causes of crime, residents, community stakeholders, and government officials cited a variety of problems, which we clustered into themes. The most-frequently discussed theme was **inadequate family and community support**, which included family instability, lack of community cohesion, negative social norms, racial tension, and gangs. Interviewees described how communities have disintegrated over time, with families and communities no longer providing support; many reported that the idea of community no longer existed and had been replaced with a collection of individuals co-existing. Discussed almost as frequently as the lack of community was **the lack of economic opportunities**, which included financial hardship, lack of job opportunities and training, and the perception that the only way to make money was through the illicit economy. Community residents and stakeholders reported that jobs had left the region and there were few opportunities for employment.

Government failures, including poorly performing criminal justice agencies, were also identified as notable causes of crime. Interviewees stated that the government was unable to appropriately respond to crimes in the community. Limited social programs and services—including amenities, social programming, and mental health services—were also described as drivers of crime, with community residents lacking positive, constructive activities and struggling with unmet needs.

Finally, **failing school systems, out-migration, and urban decay** were discussed as indirect contributors to crime. Interviewees reported that children were not getting the education they needed to become contributing members of society and that community members left if they were able to, leaving behind only those without the means to seek better opportunities elsewhere.

Interviewees described prior community improvement initiatives and programs that had addressed either crime and violence or its causes, but reported that they were all abandoned because of lack of funding, interest, or continuity in leadership. While some remained hopeful that out-of-control crime and violence would improve, many had lost hope after being promised change so many times and were resigned to a lack of improvement.

Which Research-Based Approaches Can Address These Problems?

A range of evidence-based programs that either have successfully reduced crime and violence or reduced the causes of crime and violence were identified using best practices clearinghouses and the academic literature (see Table S.1). In general, programs that *reduce* crime and violence directly rely on strong partnerships and cooperation with law enforcement and other government entities. Approaches that might *prevent* crime by targeting the risk factors are more diverse in terms of partners.

Table S.1. Summary of Evidence-Based Approaches

	Approach	Short Description	Program Effects
	Focused deterrence	Police identify active offenders in a discrete geographic location, crack down on violent offenders, and leverage deterrence power against less-serious offenders	Average effect size across 24 studies = 0.38 (or a medium effect size) in the target area
Reduce violent and drug crimes	Homicide review	Neighborhood is engaged to promote positive police-community relations and social services are offered A program that attempts to reduce homicides and nonfatal shootings through a multidisciplinary and multiagency homicide review process	Associated with 50% decrease in homicide
	Public health approach to gun violence	Use trained street violence interrupters and outreach workers, public education campaigns, and community mobilization to reduce shootings and killings	Mixed. In Chicago, reductions in shootings (13–24%) and gang violence (28–58%), but did not work in other places
	Problem-oriented policing	Develop strategies to reduce crime by systematically analyzing the problems of a community, searching for effective	A meta-analysis of 30 tests found average effect size of 0.21, which is “moderate,” in

	Approach	Short Description	Program Effects
Reduce crime by geographic location	Neighborhood watch	solutions to the problems, and evaluating the impact of these efforts Citizens try to prevent crime in their neighborhood by remaining alert for suspicious activities and reporting to the police	reducing different types of crime and delinquency A study of ten sites found crime was 16% lower in areas with programs after implementation
	Hot spots policing	Police focus their resources and manpower in discrete areas with higher volumes of crimes to disrupt criminal activity	Review of 10 studies found that it produces a moderate reduction in crime (0.12)
	Crime prevention through environmental design	A multiagency approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design by influencing offender decisions by affecting the built social and administrative environment	Closed-circuit television was associated with a 16% reduction in crime across 41 studies Traffic barriers into high-crime neighborhoods was associated with an 8–37% reduction in crime
	Disorder policing	Law enforcement uses both the criminal and municipal code to focus on cleaning up signs of disorder, such as graffiti and abandoned buildings, to signal that crime will not be tolerated	The approach is associated with a modest reduction in crime (0.21) across 30 studies
	Treatment in corrections for serious juvenile offenders	A variety of treatment programming for juveniles while they are incarcerated, including behavioral treatment, cognitive behavioral treatment, educational treatment, nonbehavioral treatment	Reduction in overall recidivism by 31%, serious recidivism by 35%
Reduce crime committed by offenders	Family functional therapy and multisystemic therapy	Family-based interventions that use a multistep approach to enhance protective factors and reduce risk factors in the family. These approaches have been found to be effective in a variety of settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multisystemic therapy participants had 54% fewer arrests and 57% fewer days incarcerated. • Family functional therapy reduced recidivism by 20%
	Correctional Education	Providing continuing education to incarcerated adults to reduce the likelihood that they will recidivate	Reduced recidivism by 13%
	Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)	CBT includes various components, such as cognitive restructuring, behavioral activation, emotion regulation, communication skills, and problem-solving	An average reduction in recidivism of 25% across 58 studies
Prevent crime through family and community support	Curriculum-based education	Trained personnel or volunteers deliver theory-based curriculum to provide support and training to parents to strengthen their knowledge, skills, and understanding with the goal of improving child and parent outcomes. This includes one-on-one or group sessions in various settings	Research from almost 170 studies has found consistent positive results of target outcomes, with large to moderate effect sizes (1.30 to 0.20) for diverse families
	Home visiting	Trained professionals visit parents and children in their homes to provide information, support, and/or training on child development, health, and parenting, as well as referrals for services. Programs begin prenatal to after birth and range in length from a few months to the child beginning primary school or beyond	A study of 20 home-visiting programs demonstrated numerous favorable impacts on primary and secondary measures (e.g., child development and school readiness and positive parenting practices)
	Community-based programs to improve social cohesion	Community residents, businesses, local organizations, and government and school officials engage in collective action to increase social interaction, develop community capacity, and connect diverse groups of people	There are no quantitative evaluations. However, a qualitative study demonstrated improvements in community engagement and social capital

	Approach	Short Description	Program Effects
Prevent crime through financial stability	Youth development community enrichment	Structured or unstructured programs that provide youth with opportunities to connect with supportive adults, develop a sense of belonging, learn positive social norms, and build skills	Two studies found that participants had lower levels of teenage pregnancy, course failure, and school suspension than students in the control group
	Mentoring	Adult or peer mentors are matched with at-risk youth (mentees). Mentors and mentees meet at least weekly at various locations to build relationships and improve outcomes, including on crime rates, academic achievement, and substance use	A meta-analysis of 10 studies on mentoring noted an effect size of –0.7 for reduction in crime; 0.41 for age of initiation of alcohol; 0.25 for age of initiation of other illicit drugs; 0.28 for high school graduation
	Vocational training	Vocational training programs use career education and certification programs, on-the-job training, industry-based education, to support acquisition of job-specific skills	A study of the effect of the Workforce Investment Act indicates higher earnings (15–30%) and employment rate (12%) compared with nonparticipants
	Subsidized employment	Transitional employment programs provide temporary, subsidized, paid jobs intended to lead to unsubsidized employment. Jobs may be supplemented with training and support services	A study of two transitional subsidized employment programs indicate an increase earnings by about \$1,000 (26%) and a decrease in welfare receipt by about \$600 (10%) on average, over 18 months for one program
Prevent crime through community	Community development	Collective action by communities to use resources to identify and address common problems and needs (e.g., infrastructure development, economics, public services, community facilities, housing, and other identified needs)	This approach has not yet been rigorously evaluated
Prevent crime through education and social skills	Academic and social development	Programs aim to improve social and emotional learning, academic performance, and behavior of children and adolescents through cognitive-behavioral strategies and collaborative decisionmaking	A longitudinal study in two low-income, high-crime rural counties indicate statistically significant positive effects on self-esteem scores and school hassles scores
	Drop-out prevention	Program focus on improving attendance, reducing infractions, increasing academic performance. Components include mentoring, counseling, vocational and social-emotional training, college preparation, tutoring, and case management for at-risk youth	Two studies of 238 students in Minneapolis high schools indicate small, positive effects on staying in school and small, potentially positive effects on progressing in school

How Can the Community Develop a Comprehensive Public Safety Strategy?

We pulled together the information from our different research tasks to offer a framework for considering all the options. Recently, there has been a shift toward collaborations with multiple

agencies in the community as a method of responding to crime problems. Implementation science literature has identified having local champions as one of the most important components of a successful crime prevention initiative. The strength of a community-coalition approach is its representation of multiple perspectives; increased community buy-in; building of community capacity and ownership; and, perhaps most importantly, making sure that efforts are well received and embraced by the community, which will facilitate every step of the process. Building a coalition will also address the other components that have been found to be important in the successful adoption of community public health initiatives, including local buy-in, developing peer sharing networks, collaborating with credible partners, and ensuring the approaches are culturally appropriate. A community-driven initiative is more likely to be successful, responsive to community needs, culturally appropriate, and, ultimately, sustainable. It is important to create this coalition early in the strategic development process.

According to the public health model of community prevention and intervention, after such a coalition is formed, it should work through planning stages. However, before this can begin, coalition partners need a shared vision and understanding of both the process and how it must be grounded in data. This will likely require a significant effort to educate coalition members so they have the skills and knowledge to understand and use research, build trust and communication, and buy-in to the process. Philanthropic foundations' involvement in building coalitions ranges from providing seed funding alone to having program officers gather groups and fund start-up activities, but there is no current consensus on what level of direct involvement is most effective and sustainable. Coalitions require strong leadership, so if leadership is not sourced locally, it will likely need to come from foundation leadership, a consultant, or another outside organization with experience successfully leading community efforts against crime.

Once the coalition is formed, the CDC recommends seven steps to create a strategy (Glasgow, Vogt, and Boles, 1999).

1. assessing the community
2. setting goals and objectives
3. finding evidence
4. selecting interventions
5. adapting
6. implementing
7. evaluating.

This report generally represents the first three steps in identifying and implementing the right approaches. However, as *it was done outside the context of a community coalition*, it only provides a good starting point for any future action. It would not be appropriate to simply select one of the approaches highlighted in this report, as merely applying funds to a stand-alone program, even if it is evidence-based, will not likely produce long-term community-level changes in crime and violence. Creating a real effect against problems as intractable as crime and

violence requires a coordinated effort that must rely heavily on community involvement to succeed.

As noted by the foundation representatives, affecting levels of crime and violence is very complex and challenging because crime and violence are so interrelated with other social and economic problems; local efforts may not show tangible results for many years. Foundations see opportunities to provide the financial support and expertise to empower willing communities and build their local capacity to make the changes that will improve quality of life for all residents, and ultimately, save lives.

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Abbreviations

BBBS	Big Brothers Big Sisters
C&C	Check & Connect
CBM	community-based mentoring
CBT	cognitive-behavioral therapy
CCTV	closed-circuit television
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CFAA	Communities for All Ages
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
GED	General Educational Development
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FFT	family-focused therapy
MST	multisystemic therapy
NIBRS	National Incident-Based Reporting System
POP	problem-oriented policing
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration
SARA	scanning, analysis, response, and assessment
SFP	Strengthening Families Program
TICB	Trauma Informed Community Building
TOP	Teen Outreach Program
UCR	Uniform Crime Reports

1. Purpose and Methodology

The RAND Corporation received a grant from the Walton Family Foundation to examine and understand crime and violence problems in two of the counties that make up the foundation's home region (Phillips County, Arkansas, and Coahoma County, Mississippi), identify evidence-based strategies for addressing those problems, and make recommendations for which strategies should be prioritized. In addition, the Walton Family Foundation requested research on how other philanthropies approach funding public safety projects. We conducted a variety of research activities to answer their four research questions:

1. How do foundations approach public safety funding?
2. What are the specific crime problems and their causes in Phillips County and Coahoma County?
3. What programs have worked to address those crime problems and causes in other jurisdictions?
4. How can this information be used to create an effective and comprehensive public safety approach tailored to these communities?

The report contains several chapters that align with the research questions. The remainder of this chapter describes the research literature on crime and violence in rural communities and provides an overview of the methods used to answer the research questions. Chapter 2 describes the role of philanthropies and their approaches to funding violence reduction. Chapter 3 provides rich and detailed information about the crime problem in the Mississippi Delta, using both official crime statistics and information collected from government officials, community stakeholders, and resident focus groups. It also describes how the local government has responded to crime problems and the challenges and barriers to crime control. In Chapter 4, we provide approaches to address community crime and violence with a summary of the research on community-level crime reduction and describe both interventions that target crime directly and would likely have an immediate impact and those that focus on the root causes of crime to prevent it before it begins. The final chapter provides a framework and recommendations for how to craft a comprehensive community-based public safety strategy in the Mississippi Delta, considering their unique challenges and opportunities.

Background on Crime and Violence in Rural Areas

Generations of researchers have built a strong knowledge base about the epidemiology of crime, its causes and correlates, and what government and nongovernment actors can do to affect it. However, most of that knowledge, particularly about how various government institutions respond to and prevent crime, is based on research on and data from large urban centers. There is a limited body of research on crime patterns in small and rural areas, with even less known about

the criminal justice systems that operate in these settings. This lack of good information and data prevents the development and implementation of effective crime control strategies and policies to combat rural crime problems.

Data from the 2015 Uniform Crime Report (UCR) (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], undated) provide a simple illustration of differences in the macro-level crime and justice system patterns between urban and small cities and metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties. Small cities (fewer than 10,000 residents) experience higher rates of violent crime than in large urban cities (298 versus 234 per 100,000), drug abuse violations (631 versus 480 per 100,000), and driving under the influence offenses (631 versus 460 per 100,000), while also having more officers per resident (3.7 versus 2.5 per 10,000), a higher overall arrest rate (4,192 versus 3,252 per 100,000), and a higher crime clearance rate (53 percent versus 49 percent in violent crime). Similar patterns are seen in nonmetropolitan counties, which experience nearly double the driving-under-the-influence rate as metropolitan counties (714 versus 375 per 100,000) and have higher drug arrest rates (468 versus 411 per 100,000).

The context of public safety challenges also differs greatly, including differences in geography; local culture and customs, such as experiences of informal social control, mistrust of the government, and reluctance to seek outside assistance; economic factors; demographic factors, such as age and family structure; availability, use, and purchasing patterns of various drugs; and the availability, use, and culture of firearms. Rural criminal justice agencies face unique challenges in addressing crime as well. RAND's Justice Innovation Center, which studies crime and justice in rural areas in the United States, found that challenges include long travel distances for law enforcement response, community supervision appointments, and court attendance; low case volumes, which incentivize the creation of multicounty or regional systems to increase efficiency and make the most of limited local budgets; limited staff and infrastructure, which requires personnel to perform multiple roles; and lack of local community-based experts and resources (Saunders et al., 2016a). Moreover, training for staff can be cost-prohibitive due to high travel expenses or the time required away from duty.

Because disorganized and inadequate response efforts to crime can exacerbate the problem, the solution may require a coordinated and targeted response by a network of local agencies and organizations, including police, parole/probation officers, the court and correctional systems, schools, service agencies, community-based youth agencies, employment agencies, employers, grassroots community organizations, local leaders, and community members.

If there is one lesson from the volumes of scholarly research on crime, it is that crime is best understood as a local problem that necessitates local and customized solutions. Each locality has its own challenges and opportunities, and there is no one-size-fits-all answer. To make recommendations, an in-depth understanding of the local crime problem is paramount—including patterns, sociodemographic correlates, and causes. We also need to understand how the local community responds to crime challenges to assess how this response corresponds with effective crime-control practices. There is also value in learning how funding organizations

leverage financial resources to address crime and violence in communities that face similar issues. Through this project, we will be able to explore philanthropic efforts to reduce crime, understand the specific crime challenges and opportunities in the Mississippi Delta region, link them to the extant research literature on effective crime prevention, and create a specifically tailored set of recommendations for philanthropists to improve public safety.

We engaged in a variety of data-collection activities, taking advantage of as much existing data as possible. Below, we provide a description of how we conducted data collection and analysis. We used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, holding multiple stakeholder meetings and community focus groups; interviewing community stakeholders, project officers at a variety of philanthropies who engage in community violence prevention projects, and government officials; and obtaining official police data. While the statistics reported by the police department provide a basic understanding of the crime problem, the primary qualitative data-collection activities have the unique strength of giving the community a mechanism to voice their thoughts and opinions in a systematic but unstructured format, providing the opportunity for a richer, more-nuanced understanding of community dynamics.

Research Methods for This Report

The research team used a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze a variety of different data sources to answer four specific research questions:

1. How do foundations approach and put together project portfolios in the community crime and safety space?
2. What are the crime problems in Phillips County and Coahoma County, and what is causing them?
3. What are effective approaches to reduce crime and violence and their causes that match the problems identified in the Mississippi Delta?
4. How can the community build a comprehensive strategy to reduce crime and violence in these two counties?

Table 1.1 provides a summary of the data-collection efforts, which are described in the following sections under each research question.

Table 1.1. Summary of Data-Collection Activities

Topic	Data	Description
The role of philanthropies in crime and violence reduction	Interviews with program officers, $n = 15$	We interviewed program officers about their role in community crime and violence prevention and the services they provide, the types of projects they fund, how they track their success, and advice they would give to a foundation entering the funding space.
Characterizing crime in the community: official statistics	Official crime statistics from the FBI for 2015 and 2016	We reviewed publicly available data from the FBI's UCR and National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS).

Topic	Data	Description
Characterizing experiences with crime, responses to crime, and what is and is not working: community perceptions	Police data from the Helena-West Helena, Arkansas, police department	We reviewed the record management system and created maps with reported criminal incidents.
	Police data from the Clarksdale, Mississippi, police department	We collaborated with Julie Baldwin from Missouri State University to obtain statistics from the Clarksdale Police Department.
	Interviews with community stakeholders, <i>n</i> = 15	We held four days of interviews with community stakeholders representing a wide array of organizations and perspectives, including the faith-based community, social service providers, grassroots organizations, educational institutions, and local businesses.
	Focus groups with residents, number of groups = 4, number of participants = 51	We held two focus groups in each community to discuss their experiences with crime and the local justice system and elicit feedback about their priorities.
Identifying research-based solutions to reduce crime and violence	Interviews with government officials, <i>n</i> = 8	We interviewed various current and former government officials to understand their unique challenges and opportunities for effectively controlling crime and violence.
	Research literature and best practices clearinghouses	We searched the academic and research literature along with best practices clearinghouses to identify programs, practices, and strategies to reduce community-level crime and violence.

Research Question 1: The Role of Philanthropies in Crime and Violence Reduction

To recruit interview participants from the philanthropic sector, we used the subscription service Foundation Directory Online Professional to search for foundations conducting grantmaking in criminal justice or related issues. We searched grants within this directory that were less than \$200,000 and occurred within the last five years. Search terms reflected seven general types of criminal justice or public safety topic areas: courts, victims, domestic and child abuse, corrections and offenders, crime prevention, juveniles, and police. We wanted a sample of foundations that were in direct control of their grantmaking strategy (e.g., not donor-advised funds), had an official criminal justice grantmaking strategy, and did not focus solely on policy advocacy or equipment. These criteria were chosen based on discussions with the Walton Family Foundation about their funding interests. We examined foundation websites to determine whether they were appropriate for this project. The grants across each topic area were aggregated and combined by grantee name, resulting in a list of 258 foundations. Because we made every effort to seek out foundations with clear criminal justice grantmaking strategies, this likely does not reflect the total universe of such grantmaking, as other foundations may be involved in different capacities. Through this process, we identified and solicited interviews (via email and phone calls) from 41 foundations, which resulted in 15 interviews (36.6-percent response rate). We did not set any criteria for the interviewees. We interviewed seven program officers, five

strategic directors/vice presidents of programs, and three executive directors. Four of our interviewees were recruited through RAND employee connections.

Table 1.2 provides the general characteristics of the foundations interviewed for this study. The youngest foundation has existed for 17 years, while the oldest is 103 years old.² Meanwhile, there is a large positive skew in the assets and giving across these foundations. In addition to variation in staffing levels, these characteristics contribute to the varying strategic approaches taken by these foundations. Additionally, many foundations in our sample practice philanthropy at the national levels (46.7 percent), with slightly fewer contributing primarily at the local level (33.3 percent). We also noticed that family-led foundations occasionally had different structures or methods of strategic decisionmaking.

Table 1.2. Characteristics of Philanthropic Interviewees' Foundations

	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Years in existence	58	59	17	103
Total assets	\$1,782,643,998	\$460,077,518	\$19,422,612	\$12,364,759,000
Total annual giving (2016)	\$84,845,220	\$18,703,587	\$696,070	\$526,405,000
Number of full-time professional staff	40.3	8	3	254
Criminal justice grants since 2012	228.7	68	7	1,424
	National Funder	State Funder	Local Funder	Family Foundation
Geography and type	46.7%	20.0%	33.3%	33.3%

Typewritten notes were coded descriptively and thematically by two of the authors. All notes were uploaded into Dedoose, an online qualitative analysis program that enables collaborative and team-based coding. Because some interview content could relate to more than one topic or theme, coders were instructed to apply more than one code, if relevant, to a given excerpt so that content could be analyzed across codes. We used a *modified grounded theory approach* (Glaser and Strauss, 2009) to analyze the responses across question domains, identifying where and how respondents vary. Grounded theory is a qualitative research approach to systematically develop theory that is grounded in observation (Charmaz, 2003; Perry and Jensen, 2001; Strauss and Corbin, 1997). It begins with identifying the core theoretical concepts and tentative links using data and concludes with validating these relationships. The first step is data collection and coding—a process of categorizing the qualitative data elements—starting with “open coding,” in which researchers develop initial categories, and then moving to “selective coding” after

² Numbers come from Foundation Directory Online Professional. For comparison, the Walton Family Foundation is 31 years old, has total assets of \$3,783,627,318, annual giving of \$442,527,107, and an estimated staff of 41.

researchers have carefully defined the core concepts. After several iterations of initial and selective coding, the theory is revised, and then the researchers identify and flesh out the details of the core concepts and categories. We coded 426 excerpts into seven domains:

- 59 statements about the philanthropic role and funding landscape
- 128 statements about funding approaches
- 98 statements about focus areas for grantmaking
- 101 statements about how they make strategic decisions regarding funding
- 76 statements about assessing impact
- 100 statements providing advice and insight from their years of experience in this area.

Research Question 2: Characterizing Crime in the Community: Official Statistics

To assess the most prevalent crime problems in Phillips County, we used NIBRS data for 2015. This is the most recent year of data reported by the main law enforcement agencies in Phillips County, including the Phillips County Sheriff's Department, the Helena-West Helena Police Department, and the Marvell Police Department. NIBRS incident-level data contain the top three offense codes for each incident, arranged in a hierarchy, with the more-severe offenses listed first. While this may reduce the frequency of some types of offenses, 99 percent of NIBRS incidents have three or fewer offense codes, making this error slight. The offense data were sorted in the order of murder/nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary/breaking and entering, larceny offenses, and motor vehicle theft. After these offenses were placed in order, the remaining offenses were listed according to how they were originally recorded in NIBRS. Arrest demographics were extracted from the incident data, which means the arrests used here reflect only those connected to crimes that occurred in 2015, rather than all arrests that occurred in 2015. Additionally, this means demographic information was limited to three arrestees or three victims for each incident.

We struggled to collect official crime data from Coahoma County. We called and emailed 13 government officials multiple times to request interviews and data, but only one person agreed to be interviewed, and this individual was not permitted to share data with us. We caution readers not to draw conclusions about anyone's unwillingness to participate in research. We partnered with an academic researcher who has been working with the Clarksdale, Mississippi, police department to address this limitation. Julie Baldwin wrote a section of this report based on her own work, which included collecting and coding official statistics from the Clarksdale Police Department.³ While the data were collected a few years prior to our current study, crime tends to be fairly stable over time, so it is unlikely that it has changed much in the intervening years.

³ A portion of her project was supported by Award No. 2014-AJ-BX-0001, awarded by the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, but the findings expressed in this section are those of Baldwin and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

Research Question 2: Characterizing Crime in the Community: Community Perceptions

We spoke with several groups of people in an effort to understand community experiences with crime and violence, along with the approaches being used to control crime and violence. We used semistructured interview protocols that were developed based on our previous work conducting needs assessments on crime and violence (Saunders et al., 2016b). Our sampling approach was derived from situational analysis and employed maximum variation sampling (Clarke, 2005). In this process, sampling is done iteratively to maximize the heterogeneity with respect to relevant themes or characteristics that evolve during the interview process. We used purposive convenience sampling, starting with the initial set of stakeholders who were invited and attended the kick-off meeting, who were identified by both the Walton Family Foundation and the research team as being engaged in public safety activities. This included law enforcement, community service providers, faith-based organizations, representatives of local government, and community activists. The interview and focus group protocols were developed to facilitate a structured but natural conversation and covered multiple domains with various prompts. Topics included types of crime, causes of crime, responses to crime, and suggestions to reduce crime. Specifically, this approach encouraged participants to “explore the issues of importance to them, in their own vocabulary, generating their own questions and pursuing their own priorities,” (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 299) which may or may not match the quantitative data.

Government Officials

To recruit interview participants from the government sector, we sought contact information from a variety of government websites and used the available information to make contact. We also leveraged any contacts that were made during an initial site visit in September 2017. When possible, initial contacts were made via email to provide an introduction to the project, with a notification that we would follow-up by phone if there was no response. For nonrespondents, we made at least two follow-up attempts either by phone or email. In Phillips County, outreach to 17 government representatives resulted in six interviews (35.3 percent). In Coahoma County, outreach to 13 government officials resulted in one interview, followed by brief discussions with several other government officials. An additional two phone interviews were completed, based on referrals from the on-site interviews. Participants were interviewed for nearly an hour and were asked about the nature of crime in their community, the perceived causes of crime, current solutions to crime problems and their effectiveness, and ideas for other ways to reduce crime.

Community Stakeholders

Recruitment began with an email sent by researchers to select community stakeholders (e.g., faith-based organizations, social service departments, educational institutions), inviting them to participate in an in-person project kick-off meeting on September 20–21, 2017. Stakeholders were identified through internet searches for organizations and agencies that represented the target groups. Repeated calls and emails were sent to invite stakeholders to participate in the

event. During the kick-off meeting, we described the study, discussed current concerns related to public safety, and solicited suggestions of community representatives about who should participate in the interviews and optimal strategies for recruiting community residents.

Following the kick-off meeting, we sent an email to a longer list of stakeholders, inviting them to participate in a 45–60 minute in-person or phone interview and requesting their assistance with recruiting community residents for the focus groups. The email included a one-page project summary, a brief announcement that could be used for outreach to community residents through social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), and a flyer for posting or distribution. Repeated calls and email messages were sent to try to obtain an interview with one to two representatives from each of the following types of community groups: schools, service agencies, community-based youth agencies, employment agencies, business owner, grassroots community organizations, and faith-based organizations.

In total, we invited 33 stakeholders to participate in our interview (16 in Coahoma County and 17 in Phillips County). Fifteen stakeholders completed an interview (seven in Coahoma County and eight in Phillips County). Seventeen did not respond after repeated contact attempts, and one refused, for a total response rate of 45 percent.

Community Focus Groups

While on site, we posted fliers in high-traffic areas (e.g., library, restaurants, local markets) to recruit participants for the focus groups. We also used print and radio media to advertise the focus groups. Individuals interested in participating in the 90-minute focus groups were invited to call a toll-free number listed on all marketing materials. Prospective participants were screened for eligibility (i.e., 18 years or older, residence in one of the target high-crime communities, and residency for one year or more). Eligible individuals were provided the date, time, and location of the focus groups. We made reminder calls to all registrants the day of the scheduled focus group. We initially intended to include up to ten participants in each group; however, because of high interest in the groups, we had 29 focus group participants in Coahoma County and 22 in Phillips County, spread across two focus group sessions in each location (a total of four focus groups). We provided a hot meal, dessert, and beverages at each group. In addition, each participant received a \$20 incentive for participating in the group until the end of the session.

Coding and Analysis

To support content categorization and streamline analysis across the three data-collection activities, typewritten notes, augmented by audio recordings, were coded descriptively and thematically using a standardized codebook. The codebook was developed in two phases. The team used a theory-based approach to codebook design by organizing a hierarchical list of topics, subtopics, and concepts drawn from the research questions and interview guide. The team then applied a grounded-theory based approach, which included independent review of the notes and

collaborative discussion about the interviews and focus groups, to identify content that was not reflected in the theory-based scheme and revise the codebook. Like the philanthropy interviews, we used Dedoose to code analyze these interviews. Coders met initially to discuss their progress and questions about code application; areas of disagreement were resolved via consensus.

We coded 455 excerpts from our interviews with government officials, community stakeholders, and resident focus groups into six domains and 59 further subthemes:

- 71 statements about what types of crime are occurring in the community
- 68 statements about when and where crime occurs
- 149 statements about the causes of crime
- 92 statements about community attributes pertaining to crime and violence
- 92 statements about how communities are currently responding to crime
- 97 recommendations to reduce crime.

We present the modal themes across each domain and describe subthemes where warranted. When appropriate, we describe differences between communities or perspectives.

Research Question 3: Research-Based Recommendations

We searched the research literature to identify a set of effective strategies for reducing and preventing crime and violence. Our goal was not to provide an exhaustive list of programs, but rather, to select a subset of evidence-based approaches that may match the needs of these communities. Therefore, there was a certain degree of researcher opinion and discretion involved. We separated this into two main searches: (1) approaches that have been identified as **reducing** crime directly and (2) approaches that **prevent** crime and violence through addressing underlying factors.

As thousands of studies broadly fit this description, we limited our search to systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and other high-quality reviews of reviews that aggregate studies to draw out larger themes that are agreed upon across the scientific community. We excluded approaches that require a change in law or policy (e.g., custodial versus noncustodial sentencing, release programs, gun control, electronic monitoring) or those that address issues that were not described by interviewees and focus group members as top crime concerns (e.g., sex offending, domestic violence, white-collar crime).

Key sources of information included

- Office of Justice Programs, Crime Solutions, a clearinghouse of what works in criminal justice, juvenile justice, and crime victim services (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, undated-b)
- Blueprints Model and Promising Programs for Positive Youth Development (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, undated-a)
- National Mentoring Resource Center, a clearinghouse of model mentoring programs (National Mentoring Resource Center, undated)

- Institute of Education Sciences, a clearinghouse of what works in education (Institute of Educational Sciences, undated-a)
- Washington State Institution of Public Policy, a benefit-cost analysis of evidence-based programs across public policy areas (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2017a)
- What Works for Health, a clearinghouse of evidence-based programs targeting numerous factors that affect health (University of Wisconsin, Population Health Institute, 2010)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA's) National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices, a clearinghouse of evidence-based mental health and substance abuse interventions (SAMHSA, undated-a).

We supplemented this with limited searches of the peer-reviewed literature on the evaluation of intervention that either **reduce crime and violence** or **address the risk factors identified by the community** using databases (Google Scholar, Web of Science, Campbell Library). As needed, we followed up on specific articles and subtopics described within the reviews to review source documents. We prioritized evidence derived from rigorous, experimental studies (i.e., randomized controlled trials).

Using this information, we ascertained the evidence base for crime-reduction programming that directly targets crime and those that target its causes and correlates. With this evidence base in mind, as well as our team's knowledge of programs commonly used in crime reduction, we identified programs, practices, and strategies that may be promising to address crime within the Mississippi Delta. Where possible, we include information about the cost, groups involved, likely impacts, and timeline for creating a change for each identified strategy.

Research Question 4: Framework for Developing a Comprehensive Public Safety Strategy

We used the information from the philanthropic interviews and review of evidence-based programs, along with our interviews and assessment of the current community challenges and assets, to bring together several well-known processes for community intervention planning to create a framework for developing a comprehensive public safety strategy. We grounded our approach in the public health and community-based intervention promotion literature and integrated it with our expertise and experience in community-based violence prevention planning, implementation, and evaluation to set out steps and key decision points for consideration. We do not provide recommendations about how to fund programs or which programs to select or make partners. Rather, we lay out different options and a process for thinking through them as a group to align with the priorities and expectations of both the foundation and the community. We provide a wealth of resources that can be used as the community develops their own comprehensive strategy to reduce crime and violence.

2. Philanthropic Approaches to Addressing Community Crime and Violence

Fifteen representatives were interviewed from a variety of small, medium, and large foundations with active crime and safety initiatives, some of which are the MacArthur Foundation, the Chicago Community Trust, the Ford Foundation, the Tow Foundation, the California Wellness Foundation, the Pinkerton Foundation, the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, the Draper-Richards-Kaplan Foundation, the Gardiner Howland Shaw Foundation, Zellerbach Family Foundation, the Jacob and Valeria Langeloth Foundation, and the Roy A. Hunt Foundation. This information was collected to provide the Walton Family Foundation with information about how their peers are working in the crime and violence space, how they make funding decisions, and how they measure the impact of their giving strategies.

Our philanthropic interviewees consisted of seven program officers, five strategic directors/vice presidents of programs, and three executive directors, providing a range of perspectives and years of experience. To situate the state of public safety and criminal justice grantmaking, several interviewees noted that the funder landscape is fairly small, although interest from emerging national funders (e.g., the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative) is growing. Additionally, they noted substantial variation in the recency and scope of their commitments in this area.

Foundation programming often focuses on efforts to fill in the gaps of the governmental process by giving people within the system a voice, preventing or repairing harm done by the system, and/or changing the system, rather than making the justice system more effective. Many philanthropies frame their role in criminal justice funding in contrast to the government's role. While recognizing it is important to work with and support the public sector, many of the perceived disadvantages and limitations inherent in the governmental role make philanthropic work in this sector vital for improvement and reform.

Additionally, foundations that support crime and violence reduction may end up in conflict with local or national policy. They may question the legitimacy of government programs and whether clients would be as responsive to such programs versus those run by local nonprofits. As one interviewee put it, “[we] had one grantee working with kids coming back from prison, and kids don’t want to be involved with the state. Private money helped to work with kids for longer.” Several foundations noted that it was important for those at risk, youth in particular, to work with people who have had similar experiences as them, noting “kids don’t want to work with people who don’t look like them. They need an authentic caring relationship. [Social service agencies] haven’t figured out how to engage.”

Finally, there may be conflict between a foundation-funded violence-prevention strategy and the criminal justice system or local criminal justice leaders. “Our philosophy is not to rely on the

criminal justice system actors. So much of our work is about repairing the harm that is created by state violence and injustice that happens in these systems.” Some foundations saw their role as filling the gaps and advocating for a fundamental change in the way the government approaches crime and violence. Stated more specifically,

The tragic side effects of mass incarceration on families and communities is a harm to young people. We have to think about it along a continuum, so we have to build community capacity to keep neighborhoods safe.

We identified seven key themes: (1) the philanthropic role and funding landscape, (2) grantmaking focus areas, (3) approaches to funding, (4) strategic decisions regarding funding, (5) funding approaches, (6) assessing the impact, and (7) advice and insight for other philanthropies that are considering starting a new public safety funding area.

Crime and Violence Reduction Funding Landscape

When interviewees discussed the criminal justice funding landscape, their responses often referenced the role of government funding and other philanthropic foundations. First, many interviewees noted that the criminal justice funding landscape was limited to a small group of funders, but the number seemed to be growing, with increased attention to justice-related issues, such as police use of force, mass incarceration, and juvenile justice reform. While many criminal justice funders are new to the area, a few foundations have been working on criminal justice reform for 20 to 30 years. Still, several interviewees noted that criminal justice work is often a smaller component of a foundation’s overall grantmaking, noting that criminal justice was not historically seen as a major issue or that it can be difficult to convince private individuals to get on board. As one interviewee put it, “One of the real challenges is there aren’t a lot of comrades in this business. You have to work hard to convince people that this is important and the work is important.”

Since the number of funders is limited, several interviewees noted that the need for funding outweighs their capacity, making funding decisions difficult. The limited supply of funders might be due to the nature of those involved in the criminal justice system and perceived reasons for their involvement. As one interviewee explained:

There’s a huge reaction against efforts to help people in the criminal justice system. There’s a recalcitrance in folks who say, “These are the consequences for the actions and tough luck,” without realizing there are life circumstances and other structural factors . . . At the end of the day, [they] are humans and need support and can’t do it without it.

The dearth of philanthropic efforts to help justice-involved individuals was a common sentiment among interviewees. Recognition of this deficiency was often expressed in conjunction with their firm commitment to have an impact in this area. Because the funding landscape is relatively small, many interviewees expressed a desire to partner with other foundations to promote ideas and/or coordinate their funding strategies. These efforts took three

basic forms: official strategic partnerships, knowledge sharing partnerships (official memberships, conferences or events), and peer-to-peer networking.

There was some concern that foundations in the criminal justice sphere focus on current events or subjects that are receiving recent attention (rather than on long-term strategies) or emphasize new and flashy projects rather than commit to those that have been proven to be effective, particularly when it comes to grantee organizations. Others saw short-term, high-impact projects as the only way to invest their money to achieve the most results. Some of this variation in approach is related to the size of the organization and its ability to fund certain projects versus others.

Those interviewees who discussed the role of government funding in the short and long term mentioned two themes. First, in the short term, the goal of many philanthropies is to get the government to notice their work and adopt it as the new government approach, either through funding or legislative action. Long-term, philanthropies noted that government funding and commitment to certain approaches was highly variable and should not be counted on. Therefore, while philanthropies recognize the importance of moving their working into the public sphere, they also understand the need to remain vigilant advocates of their work and to be ready to support projects that lose government funding.

Additionally, interviewees noted that the government is no longer considered an appropriate or effective source of funding for solving important problems using the innovative strategies that hold the most promise. The governmental response is perceived as inefficient, overly political, and lacking a deep understanding of issues and legitimacy for the client base or target population. According to one project officer,

there is not enough funding and/or understanding of the segregated nature of communities, and how this allows the problem to go unaddressed. The lack of public outrage is due to the fact that this isn't happening in certain communities.

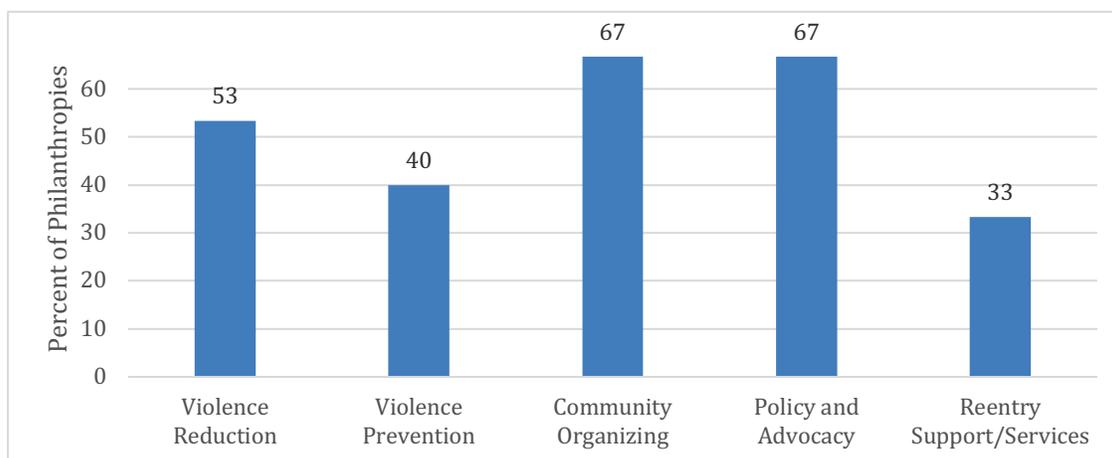
This partially explains why many foundations mentioned changing the narratives around criminal justice reform as a key goal. They believe that changing the mindset of the public will lead to changes in policy and legislation.

Philanthropic Giving Focus Areas

The foundations reported supporting projects that span a variety of criminal justice-related topics and approaches, ranging from youth prevention to targeting street-level violence, funding direct services to advocating for changes in national policy, and using innovative bottom-up, community-driven strategies to implement research-based programs. There was almost universal agreement that pursuing a single focus would not be effective; rather, reducing crime and violence requires multiple efforts across different issue areas. According to one representative, “[Reducing crime and violence] requires comprehensive approaches to address not only root causes of violence and discord, but [there] also needs [to be] these more-targeted interventions

for actors involved in criminal activities.” Another representative said, “[T]rustees see community development and youth violence prevention as separate, but there’s no question that they’re connected; I make the connections for them.” Figure 2.1 illustrates the types of projects the sample of philanthropies supports. It should be noted that no foundation supported only one type of investment project.

Figure 2.1. Types of Philanthropic Investment Projects



In the violence-reduction category, 53 percent of philanthropies support violence-reduction projects, including focused deterrence strategies, street-violence interrupters, intensive services to individuals involved in gun violence, and engaging those who are actively involved in violence to find solutions. These violence-reduction efforts were all community-based, meaning they focused their work in one or a few discrete, smaller geographic locations. Project officers noted a few important considerations related to implementing these projects, including (1) an understanding that although violence-reduction efforts focus on immediate changes, they likely take many years to make any notable impact on violence levels, (2) the foundation’s preference was to fund efforts that were not likely to be supported by federal funds, and (3) the foundation’s involvement in a great deal of investment and collaboration between their staff and local providers. These projects were also described as being relatively high risk for foundations because they involve program components that can be a hard sell, such as providing monetary incentives to active gang members to not engage in criminal behavior. At least one interviewee noted that if or when violence occurs, the foundation must be willing to stand by their program. Finally, they reported that an inclusive group of stakeholders must be involved, including those engaged in violence and groups without the capacity to run large grants and programs; this can present program-accountability challenges that can garner negative press. Projects that directly target street-level violence were more likely to be funded by large foundations. One interviewee described some of the challenges of street-level violence reduction efforts.

We don't mind unconventional organizations; those are the types we need to fund because they may have trouble elsewhere. We go into it eyes open understanding the other side . . . "these are criminals, how can you help them." That doesn't deter us from trying to think through and shape the narrative.

Slightly fewer foundations reported funding youth violence prevention—programs and projects that attempt to prevent serious crime by either (1) identifying and helping at-risk individuals or individuals who are engaged in very low-level crime or (2) targeting community-level conditions that may be conducive to crime and violence. These foundations provide services to at-risk youth or youthful offenders in a variety of contexts (e.g., community services, school-based programming, policing/prosecution strategies). Project officers described violence as a continuum and believe that one effective way to curb it is to prevent it by keeping youth and nonviolent offenders in the community and out of residential placements. There were two general types of program: (1) prevention programs with at-risk youth that involve prosocial programming, skill building, and education/job placement and (2) diversion programs to keep nonviolent offenders from being processed through the criminal justice system. These were used in partnership with the other projects to support other violence-reduction efforts.

An interesting type of project that philanthropies funded under the umbrella of crime and violence was community organizing, which broadly covers supporting grassroots engagement with community members and leaders, as well as efforts to build local institutions and human capital. Two-thirds of the foundations described these projects as taking a longer-term approach to curbing crime and violence with the understanding that the communities experiencing the problem both knew the problem better and had to be involved in the solution. The foundations are working to build community capacity and empower locals to guide their crime- and violence-reduction strategies, ranging from focusing on youth and prevention to community violence reduction. This approach was used by small and large foundations; those that focus on the local, state, and national level; and family foundations (foundations governed by a benefactor or their family).

Philanthropies also support a variety of policy and advocacy efforts (67 percent in our sample). They described this as an important and unique function of their work. These efforts complement the other programming and, as one interviewee who focuses on sentencing reform stated, "[It is a] two-part strategy—part is getting and helping legislators to see clear to shortening sentences and moderating use of incarceration." Some prefer to house their policy and advocacy work within their foundation, where their staff are the ones responsible for lobbying, while others fund different organizations to advocate on their behalf.

Finally, about one-third of our interviewees maintain active portfolios in reentry. These portfolios fell into two broad categories—providing services to those returning to the community after periods of incarceration and working with businesses change policies preventing felons from obtaining employment and services.

Funding Decisions

The foundation representatives described a variety of ways that their organizations got involved in funding crime and violence projects—as an expansion of one of their other priority areas, a priority identified by their boards (or family member leading the foundation), or a need identified by the communities they serve. Occasionally, foundations perceived crime prevention/intervention grantmaking to be a natural expansion of their work with children, poverty, or racial justice. Addressing crime and violence, and particularly gun and gang violence, are part of the central mission of another set of foundations. Finally, another set of organizations picked up a portfolio in the area because it came up as a need from the community when doing grassroots work. Of course, these are not mutually exclusive causes, and foundations may fall into more than one category.

For the set of foundations that got involved through another focus area, drawing boundaries around their portfolios came up as an important issue when making funding decisions. As one interviewee put it, “The toughest thing for us is figuring out where that slippery slope is; violence is one slice of bigger issue; it’s connected to poverty and racism; it’s a result of unresolved racism; institutional racism and [the] othering of people that allow criminalization of people.” Another program officer described how making an impact in these entrenched problems will take a long time and needs a matching long-term funding and programmatic strategy:

I’m working on basic human needs, and there’s no way there’s going to be quick impact; we need to be engaged longer term. No matter how much money; we’re not going to see impact for three to five years; we need to make significant investments.

When describing the strategy of a foundation whose central mission is crime and violence, it is clear that the program officers have a deep and nuanced understanding of not only current research, but also of innovative and promising programming that has not been rigorously researched. A lot of work is determined through consensus on emerging issues and strategies, but as foundations, they are also able to maintain their individual emphasis on things they are interested in. In addition, the work is guided by looking at national best practices.

Another feature for this type of foundation’s strategic giving plan is that they work closely with the criminally involved population.

If you’re talking about criminal justice, you should be talking to people caught up in the system. Ex-offender organizations, for example. We’ve had some [organizations] help us—what are the challenges, what needs to be done, what’s right, what’s good, what’s bad. Gaining that knowledge is important.

Make sure that the people who are engaged in violence and/or victimized are in the room—not just the “average resident.” We had to push our own selves to get this engagement. How to get beyond community cohesion and crime, need those who are pushed to the margins—for example, sex workers.

Finally, when crime is identified as a community problem, foundations have provided funding for projects that are responsive to the articulated need.

My major thing is . . . spend a lot of initial time, whether it's focus groups, whatever, find out what the community wants and needs. Allow them to sort of guide where you're going to put your resources and what areas you're going to focus on—bubble up versus trickle down—foundations shouldn't be dictating what needs to be done, but responding to community needs.

In terms of figuring out which projects to fund, foundations seem to be a bit more varied. Some prefer to fund ideas and organizations in their early stages, some develop relationships and support people and projects for multiple years, and others work with experts to determine which direction they should go. There was near-universal agreement that selecting grantees and projects is challenging, requires vetting, and needs to start small and recognize meaningful progress will require a long-term commitment.

Seed money with people you have confidence in and vet them through others. Start them out with a modest amount. Once we know you, we're talking multi-year and general operating and larger grants.

The real challenge with grantee relationships cuts across any field. Finding grantees that are at cutting edge of innovation that are connected to real people who are impacted by systems and policies.

For an eight-month period, we held symposia series with people working in the field to see where a small foundation could have an impact.

Making Awards

In addition to determining what to fund, foundations also discussed how they fund their criminal justice projects. Interviewees often described four aspects of their funding process. First, they occasionally discussed their organization's perspective on being a sole funder of organizations or projects. Second, they discussed their existing formal (i.e., funding-based) partnerships with nonprofits and other philanthropies. Third, they explained their preferred funding type and explained this preference in relation to organizational goals. Finally, they often provided unique insights into the grantor-grantee relationship and discussed the nature of such relationships as they pertain to philanthropic giving for criminal justice issues.

Many foundations framed their decisions to be a sole funder as a function of risk. For instance, some were more accepting of higher levels of risk when the grant amount is small and/or the grantee is implementing a program that is novel or addresses a new issue. This was not the predominant approach, and this "high-risk" funding was often framed as a way to attract more funders. For instance, "We're fine with being a lead funder and helping leverage that investment to get other funders. Then we'll talk to other funders to see if they'll partner with us. We're comfortable taking calculated risks." Depending on the appetite for risk, other grantees discussed a more-stringent approach for new or untested grantees, "We've always tended to support programs that are small or [We] might have more reporting stipulations, but we are

open to those conversations [In] terms of talking about sustainability, we don't want to be the primary funders.” Thus, this organization attempts to manage risk through increased oversight in the short term, but the long-term plan still involves other sources of funding.

Some foundations were less likely to fund grantees with limited sources of funding. In some cases, this was due to small grant amounts. For one family foundation,

we like to see who else is funding or where you're planning to get that money. If you don't get that money, what are you going to do? A lot of times we seem to be the group that [potential grantees say], “[W]ith your funding, we will be able to do it.”

Occasionally, the other source of funding is the government, but this is not necessarily required. Lastly, even if an applicant's grant is denied by the foundation, some make it a point to connect them to other foundations. This reflects their general tendency to work with other foundations and support the work of nonprofit organizations.

Funding Partnerships

Official strategic partnerships are somewhat rare but provide useful examples for making strategic funding decisions (see Table 2.1). One clear example is the Chicago Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities. This fund is the administrator for the larger Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities, which consists of more than 30 foundations focused on addressing gun violence in Chicago. The foundations in this fund do not pool money, but manage and track grants and individual funders through a consulting firm. This collaboration was seen as an effective way to tackle a serious, seemingly intractable problem by working toward a common goal through coordinated funding, while also allowing each foundation to fund in their preferred focus area (e.g., policy advocacy, direct support, supporting police). Other official partnerships use a pooled fund approach, such as the Hope and Heal Fund. This fund consists of ten foundations, and strategic decisions are made by the fund's executive director with the guidance of a steering committee. Either approach (pooled or unpooled) should be considered based on the foundation's goals and partnerships.

Table 2.1. Formal Philanthropic Collaboration Examples

Collaborative	Description of Effort
Youth Transition Funders Group	Collaborative of approximately 100 national, regional, and community funders. Three foci include work groups directed at issues pertaining to foster care, economic well-being, and youth justice Prominent members include the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation (Youth Transition Funders Group, 2015)
Hope and Heal Fund	Collaborative of ten regional and family foundations emphasizing a public health approach to reducing gun violence, including suicide Members include the Akonadi Foundation, Blue Shield of California Foundation, California Endowment, California Wellness Foundation, Heising-Simons Foundation, Liberty Hill,

Collaborative	Description of Effort
Chicago Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities	<p>Rosenberg Foundation, Sierra Health Foundation, Weingart Foundation, and Wintemute Family Foundation (Hope and Heal Fund, undated)</p> <p>Focused on the goal to “create the conditions for violence prevention and reduction during the summer months . . . build community cohesion and promote peace.” This fund is the administrator for the Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities (described in the next row).</p> <p>Supporters include Bank of America, Chicago Community Trust, Joyce Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Polk Bros. Foundation, and Woods Fund of Chicago, among others (Chicago Fund for Safe and Peaceful Communities, 2018)</p>
Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities	<p>Funding areas include street outreach and violence interruption, police reform and community relations, gun policy, and efforts to promote community safety and peace. More than 30 foundations and individual donors (Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities, undated)</p>
Safety and Justice Challenge	<p>Supporting local leaders to adopt innovative strategies for reducing the misuse and overuse of jail incarceration. Twenty sites were selected for the challenge and will use a data-driven approach to model strategies that keep people out of jail. Collaboration is not among philanthropies, but among research institutions, professional associations, and nonprofit organizations (Safety and Justice Challenge, undated)</p>

One example of a large *knowledge-sharing partnership* is the Youth Transition Funders Group. This group is made up of more than 100 national, regional, and community funders that focus on three youth-centered foci: foster care, economic well-being, and youth justice. The Youth Transition Funders Group provides funders with a platform to discuss ideas and approaches across these foci, through representative working groups, conference calls, calls for funders, and biannual national meetings. Another foundation we interviewed coordinates an annual multiday conference that includes nonprofit organizations and philanthropic members and includes an extra day for funder-only networking and idea sharing. Both of these approaches were identified as helpful for information sharing and strategy development.

Lastly, informal, peer-to-peer networks were seen as helpful, particularly when the foundations have similar geographic interests. These may even involve partnerships with foundations that primarily work in other sectors (e.g., foundations interested in justice, health, community funds). Such connections promote information sharing and occasionally lead to ad hoc funding partnerships.

Many respondents emphasized the value of having formal partnerships with various types of organizations and government agencies, crossing topic areas if necessary (e.g., health, education). Such collaborations form as a way for foundations to maximize impact and to ensure they are not duplicating work. These large formal collaboratives have two general funding approaches, depending on whether they pool funds. There was no consensus as to whether pooled or unpooled funds were favored, seemingly depending on foundation preference and situational characteristics.

For instance, smaller organizations or those looking to invest less money in an area might join a pooled fund and take a board or oversight seat. Some foundations noted that they take a

board seat for their grantees as well. Joining a pooled fund allows the foundation to continue its other work while also maximizing impact (sometimes called “collective impact initiatives”). Some of the smaller foundations believe that this is the best way for them to spend their relatively limited resources, noting “no one was coordinating the work, so we funded the coordination efforts . . . we aren’t directive and we realized focusing specifically in targeted communities wasn’t the strategy for us. It’s a capacity issue.” Such coordinating activities were also seen as an effective way to be exposed to the work taking place in a new area.

Type and Length of Awards

Many funders reported using a blend of funding types based on their overall strategy and the types of work being funded. Additionally, their relationship with an individual grantee might affect the type and length of support they were willing to provide. The three most common types of funding include general operating support, project-specific funding, and policy advocacy. Opportunistic funding was also mentioned as a way for foundations to remain flexible to the needs of the community. Funding for evaluation research, technical assistance, and capital (i.e., seed funding) were also mentioned but were not dominant funding approaches for many foundations.

General operating support and policy advocacy were often favorably mentioned, although it should be noted that many foundations often use the standard approach of project-specific funding. One main reason for viewing general operating and policy advocacy positively includes the flexibility it allows for grantees to do their work, potentially leading to higher impact. The common, project-based approach might distract the grantee from the work with a focus on collecting project metrics and looking for new project-focused funding. For policy advocacy work, breaking up the work into smaller projects does not always seem practical or effective.

Interestingly, general operating support for direct services might be seen as a way to also change policy. One interviewee whose foundation solely funds via general operating support provided a unique insight that many foundations “are missing the boat about how much you can reform [policy] with direct services . . . it’s not obvious but it’s real.” This interviewee went on to note that the public sector was beginning to reach out in an effort to adopt the programs the foundation had been funding.

Again, the nature of funding can remain fluid in terms of type and length, particularly with an established grantee. Interviewees expressed more comfort in providing general operating and/or long-term support to grantees they were familiar with. Several noted that although the eventual goal might be to get public sector funding, that process can be lengthy or unpredictable. Foundations might commit to longer-term funding arrangements, noting that change is slow and impact often delayed.

Grantee Relationships

Both formal and informal partnerships are integral to philanthropic work. Informal partnerships often act as platforms for knowledge sharing that inform strategic decisionmaking and can lead to formal partnerships down the line to maximize impact. Every foundation we interviewed has developed a network of philanthropic foundations, nonprofit organizations, and government entities. The significance of the networks cannot be overstated. As one interviewee advised, “networking with other funders is really important, and policy makers as well. If I had to do it over again, I would do the networking first to connect with regional funders and build a learning space.”

The grantor-grantee relationship was seen as a fundamental element of foundation work. Many interviewees noted that, although it is important to require the grantee to report on metrics of their work, that aspect seemed to be less important than fostering two-way dialogue. Interviewees recommended understanding the grantee’s context. This might include a likely scenario involving a combination of underfunding, a lack of staff or experience to produce high-quality reports, and the challenges inherent in criminal justice work (e.g., clients, politics). Reflecting on the context of many grantees, one interviewee noted, “The organizations we fund are super under-, and we are asking them to move mountains. They are exhausted and under-resourced.” Another interviewee noted the downside to an overemphasis on output and the importance of recognizing the grantor-grantee power dynamic:

Having sat on the other side of the table, you always want to please the funder, but it starts to mask what’s really going on . . . the conversations I get the most out of with grantees are those that are informal; there’s been a level of trust established, and I find out the most when you really do make it a more informal conversation than trying to be this very impressive organization . . . you’re never going to get over [the power dynamic] fully. There are ways for funders to put organizations at ease to get over the power dynamic to encourage some transparent conversation to get at the crux of the issue. Some organizations don’t want to reach out to the funder when they’re having financial issues because they think it might lead to cuts. By having that power dynamic, you’re missing out on opportunities for honest conversations and impactful giving.

Another interviewee noted that relationship building takes time, but strong relationships help both the grantor and grantee remain resilient when facing challenges:

Acknowledging that the relationship building and building of trust takes time and you can’t rush that process. It’s not necessarily going to happen in one grant cycle. For people to actually believe that you are there authentically, willing to stand alongside them. Change moves at the speed of trust. You can rush things, but if the relationship wasn’t there, we are going to run into walls, and we haven’t stored up enough of that capital to weather those hard times.

The closeness and long-term nature of these relationships often require extra effort on the part of the foundation, as one interviewee advised, “Spend time developing relationships that are beyond providing funding.” This will take a variety of forms, depending on the setting.

Additionally, sustaining relationships means that “it is important to be transparent about abilities and challenges . . . be clear about where the foundation has been and how they are interested in going forward. Then make sure partners do the same.” This applies to both grantor-grantee and foundation partnerships. Funding approaches, particularly regarding the types and length of funding, may also be a consideration when trying to develop relationships with grantees. As one interviewee stated, “There is value to having those project-specific and outcome-specific investments and [having] the general operating thing as well. It allows trust and honest feedback about what works and what doesn’t work.”

In addition to relationship and trust building with grantees, considering the context that many organizations find themselves working in is also important. Noting the issues with funding grantees at different levels of development, one interviewee described an organizing framework as such:

I’ve sort of grouped organizations into three categories: those that do amazing work but have no capacity to tell their story or write grants; those that do brilliant grants and are sophisticated, so they get money; and a small group that have capacity and do good work and can tell their story. This last group are the darlings of the funder world.

This interviewee also made note of regional differences, explaining:

San Francisco has tremendous resources and sophisticated organizations. Other places have the same or more-severe and more-persistent social challenges, but there are very few funders there. One challenge is they don’t have organizations that are sophisticated enough to manage or accept grants. The area is underserved, but they don’t get investments because there’s no one to invest in.

There is no obvious solution to this problem, suggesting a long-term strategy is important. Investing in regions without many sophisticated organizations brings more risk, and developing connections with established organizations working in other domains (e.g., health, education) might be part of the long-term strategy.

Measuring Impact

Everything discussed so far in this section is focused on ensuring the highest return on investment—setting focus areas and goals, making strategic decisions, developing appropriate funding approaches, developing relationships with other foundations and grantees, and constant refinement along the way. Foundations expect their funds to improve conditions “on the ground.” No matter their stated goals, they expect the projects or grantees they fund to effect change. Nevertheless, while many philanthropies have clear examples of success, many reported that assessing their own impact was a challenge. One interviewee highlighted the dynamics between staff and board members and how the disconnect between their roles center on questions of impact:

A lot of foundations struggle with that. We came up with our own theory of philanthropy. Who we are and what's the change we want to see? How are we measuring impact? Not for the work, but for the foundation as a whole. It's not as much of an issue for the staff, but for the board, who is more removed.

Notably, there are early signs that philanthropic contributions can make a difference in public safety and justice. A recent article found that, at a general level, having more local nonprofits in a community is associated with reduced crime (Sharkey, Torrats-Espinosa, and Takyar, 2017). Specifically, for every ten additional nonprofits that form to prevent violence, the murder rate decreases by 9 percent, the violent crime rate decreases by 6 percent, and the property crime rate decreases by 4 percent. While alternative explanations for these crime reductions exist, this research was cited by a couple of our interviewees as a metric of philanthropic success in this area. The connection between the growth of local nonprofit organizations and philanthropic support is an easy one to make, as such organizations rely on foundation grants for at least some of their funding. Nevertheless, the notion that "more is better" is not surprising, but it also is not very useful for understanding which approaches are likely to have the most impact.

One of the clearest ways in which foundations attempt to assess impact is by tracking the deliverables or outputs of their grantees. That is, by ensuring the work is getting done, the foundation can be reasonably assured that they have done their due diligence. As one interviewee explained,

Anecdotally, programs are full to the brim. They are receiving participant referrals . . . I'm so close to it, I can see it. Kids who have not been engaged in any positive programming or efforts are all of the sudden feeling engaged.

Talking to grantees and understanding their successes in a qualitative or anecdotal way is a natural function of the grantor-grantee relationship and is the most-direct and immediate way to assess impact. External grantee recognition may also signal a sound investment. For example, one grantor shared the following:

We got an email today from an organization we fund. The executive director [. . .] has been honored by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* because of their work in criminal justice and immigrant rights. To me, that's a really good sign that we invested in the right people.

Still, many foundations expressed a desire or ongoing plans to assess their impact. There are a variety of reasons why foundations themselves often do not move from examining process to examining outcome, and many of them are inherent challenges. First, many foundations do not have the internal or financial capacity to conduct outcome evaluations. Second, it is often challenging to define a timeline for work. Third, many successes are hard to quantify.

Having internal and/or financial capacity to conduct impact evaluations distinguishes large foundations from their smaller counterparts. Smaller foundations often do not have the funding to support evaluations, much less internal evaluation staff. For larger foundations, timing might present issues for evaluating impact. Many of the issues they fund are complex and require long-term solutions and knowing when to evaluate impact within the parameters of a grant cycle can

be challenging. Several foundations pointed to policy or legislative successes that resulted from their funding but noted that this was the result of several years of work. Violence reduction work also requires a long-term scope.

I'm working on basic human needs, and there's no way there's going to be quick impact; we need to be engaged longer term. With gun violence, we're talking has the violence decreased since last year? We really need to go back eight years to look at the state on shaky ground and closing schools. It's been coming. No matter how much money, we're not going to see impact for three to five years. We need to make significant investments.

Knowing what to evaluate and how to measure it can also be a challenge. Changing public narratives, supporting and developing leaders and advocates, and some other strategic goals (e.g., building partnership networks) are difficult to measure, go undocumented, or do not trace back to common criminal justice metrics (e.g., city-level violence).

Some foundations note that although it is difficult to evaluate their impact, there is an avenue to promote or increase the impact of their work through marketing or communication strategies. This might take the form of internal memos, reports, or videos, but it may also include reaching out to or funding external organizations to raise awareness and engage in storytelling in a certain area. By promoting their work, they also seek to present a different narrative of what's possible for the criminal justice system and those whose lives are touched by it, as one interviewee expressed, "attempts to shift the narrative to recognize humanity is the biggest challenge of all." Several interviewees recognized the importance of maintaining the balance of promoting the work while not taking credit for it, explaining:

It's a balance because we're not doing this work, so we aren't trying to claim that we're doing it. We're supporting it and making it happen, but we have to be careful. You don't want philanthropy to get out there and say we're responsible. But there is a need to communicate that need and what we're doing so that the other narrative isn't the only one out there. I see us trying to amplify the work and the fabulous citizens doing the work, but the narrative nationally has been one-sided.

While foundations are engaging in an ongoing struggle to understand, assess, and promote the impact of their funding, interviewees believed the work should continue focusing on long-term impact. This is evidenced by some interviewees who spoke of measuring impact against the consequences of not funding at all, explaining, "When you fund work like this that's very long term, it's not the success, it's trying to keep things from getting worse," with another asking, "What is our role, and what is our impact? We as a foundation need to be thinking this isn't our work, we're just supporting it. What wouldn't have happened if we hadn't supported it?" The overall need to push forward with funding criminal justice issues is best summarized by an interviewee with decades of philanthropic experience in this area, who noted, "Measuring success in justice and system reform takes many years, so we've been patient. There are a small number of people moving the needle. We stick with the people that we know and keep working."

Advice for New Foundations Entering the Justice Space

In addition to the challenge of assessing impact, interviewees also provided unique insights into issues and dynamics that are beyond the scope of their funding efforts but are important to consider nonetheless. This includes using a racial lens to understand justice issues and solutions, building trust and understanding power dynamics, and understanding the political landscape.

Focus on Equity

Several interviewees noted the overlap between social and racial injustice and injustice in the criminal justice system. For them, this is important in understanding which communities are most affected by criminal justice issues and where to focus resources. One interviewee noted that this helps foundations understand the bigger picture but also contributes to strategic decisionmaking and increasing impact, explaining,

It's often a challenge to think about how to integrate issues of social equity and justice in a new body of work. I would encourage that if they can bring to bear a clear-eyed approach to tackling race and gender along with whatever system reform, it will be additive and generative to their work. It will help them be aware of how our system is functioning and disproportionately affecting certain communities.

This racial lens is strongly connected to two other considerations. First, involving those who are affected by the justice system and the second is attempting to de-silo efforts to address problems. Programs that employ individuals with a criminal record were viewed favorably by several interviewees. Since their backgrounds and experiences match those of their clients, this has the perceived benefits of improving trust and improving employee understanding of the complete range of issues clients face.

This latter benefit is related to the common understanding of many interviewees that the challenges that criminally involved clients face cut across a variety of spheres, and challenges in one sphere affect their ability to make progress in another. This helps the foundation be more strategic in their funding or partnerships, noting “Looking at it from the experiences of kids and families, it's largely the same kids and families impacted by juvenile justice, child welfare, adult justice, and mental health systems.”

Other barriers are less direct and can be categorized as life stressors or barriers, such as exposure to violence or lack of transportation. As one interviewee explained,

If the young person that we are designing this amazing program for is not safe making it from home to their training, our investments are for naught. If the neighborhoods with the highest poverty are disproportionality impacted by crime, our economic rehab strategies won't work.

While many barriers are common, there are varying levels of importance across problems, for instance, “with domestic violence, there needs to be a de-siloing of the sector from larger

systems in order for there to be true progress. Survivors have barriers to employment and housing. We need to be talking to a lot of different sectors.”

A Warning About Politics

The influence of politics was not discussed as often, but it is certainly important to consider when working on criminal justice issues. These considerations can be internal, possibly affecting the foundation’s reputation or status, or external, possibly affecting the success of the work being funded. Internally, it is not a matter of having the organizational wherewithal to stand behind an issue and your work on that issue. One interviewee noted that some foundations get out of funding areas because of politics, explaining,

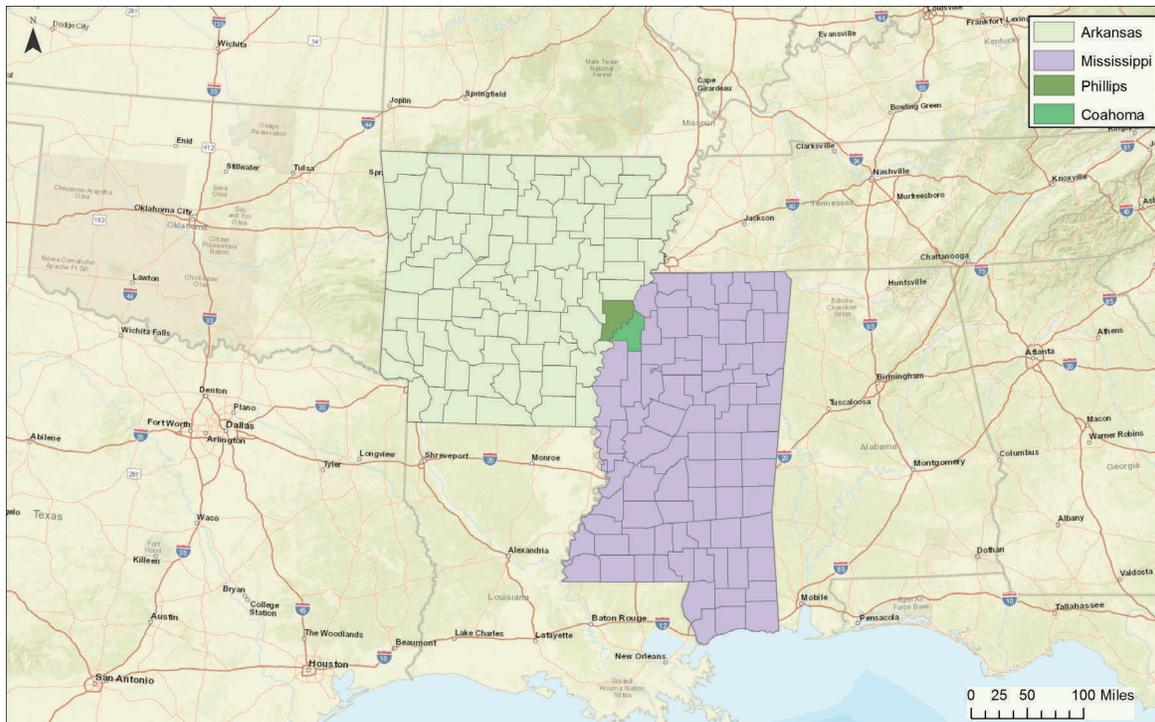
[A]s we’ve talked to other peers and asked them about investing in this area and why they do or don’t, and see why they stayed or left the space—this is what we heard. If you are the one who funds a signature program and there is a high-profile murder, scandal, etc., your board is not going to want to be on the other side of that editorial page. What allows people to go through those movements is really being grounded in the commitment and how it is connected to your issue.

As it relates to “being grounded in the commitment,” one interviewee noted the power of leveraging leadership (e.g., the “president’s pulpit”) to stand by the foundation’s work. External political considerations can distract a foundation from its priorities or make the work it funds more difficult or less effective. Stated simply, one interviewee advised to “pay attention to politics as part of strategy and analysis.”

3. Crime and Violence in the Mississippi Delta

Phillips County, Arkansas, and Coahoma County, Mississippi, are adjacent counties settled along the Mississippi River in a region generally referred to as “the Delta” (although it is not actually near the Mississippi Delta; see Figure 3.1). Both counties have small populations, with the majority of the population residing in their respective largest cities—Clarksdale in Coahoma County and Helena-West Helena in Phillips County. With fertile soil, agriculture had, and continues to have, a large influence on these counties’ economy and their communities.

Figure 3.1. Phillips County, Arkansas, and Coahoma County, Mississippi



The geographic and agricultural characteristics of the Mississippi Delta have led to many rich cultural traditions, most notably the historic and ongoing artistic and musical traditions. The beginnings of blues music traces to enslaved people who became sharecroppers in the Mississippi Delta after slavery ended. These traditions contribute to substantial tourism in the communities centered on historic sites, yearly festivals, and Clarksdale’s position as part of the Blues Trail. The area is also known for Civil War battlefields and cemeteries, with ongoing Civil War reenactment events (e.g., the Battle of Helena). Leveraging this history, downtown revitalization efforts are evident in Clarksdale and Helena-West Helena, with some indicators of

success. While the revitalization efforts necessarily leverage and support existing tourism in the region, they are also evidence of residents’ strong ties to the area.

Despite these positive qualities, poverty and outmigration are substantial challenges facing the Mississippi Delta. As shown in Table 3.1, almost half (41.2 percent) of individuals in Coahoma County and one-third (32.3 percent) of individuals in Phillips County live below the poverty level, percentages well above the corresponding state poverty rates of 20.8 percent and 17.2 percent, respectively. Population decline is also unmistakable in the Mississippi Delta, with 8.9-percent and 12.8-percent population decreases since 2010 in Coahoma and Phillips County, respectively—both very rural counties with small urban centers. Longer-term trends are even more stark; since 2000, Coahoma County has experienced a 22.2-percent population decline, and Phillips County has experienced a 28.2-percent population decline. Together, poverty and outmigration have contributed to substantial issues for local governments in the Mississippi Delta as they struggle to keep pace with abandoned and dilapidated properties, which—in addition to being a visible symbol of the economic challenges—contribute to public health and public safety concerns.

Table 3.1. County- and State-Level Demographic Characteristics

	Coahoma County	Mississippi Overall	Phillips County	Arkansas Overall
Population (2016 estimate)	23,809	2,988,726	18,975	2,988,248
Population change since 2010	-8.9%	0.1%	-12.8%	2.5%
Population change since 2000	-22.2%	5.1%	-28.2%	11.8%
Demographics				
Percentage black only	76.3%	37.7%	62.1%	15.7%
Percentage white only	21.4%	56.9%	34.8%	72.9%
Percentage Asian only	0.5%	1.1%	0.5%	1.6%
Percentage Hispanic/Latino (any race)	1.5%	3.1%	2.0%	7.3%
Percentage two or more races/ethnicities	0.7%	1.2%	1.1%	2.0%
Percentage female	54.0%	51.4%	52.8%	50.9%
Percentage age <18	27.2%	24.1%	26.4%	23.6%
Percentage age 65+	14.2%	15.1%	17.3%	16.3%
Education and economic status				
Percentage high school graduates	77.5%	83.0%	76.4%	85.2%
Percentage of individuals below poverty level	41.2%	20.8%	32.3%	17.2%
Median household income	\$28,217	\$40,528	\$26,829	\$42,336
Social				
Percentage with disability (<65)	11.4%	11.9%	18.0%	12.3%

	Coahoma County	Mississippi Overall	Phillips County	Arkansas Overall
12-month birth estimate—teen birth rate (per 1,000 age 15–19) 2016*	17	24	164	28
12-month birth estimate—teen birth rate (per 1,000 age 15–19) 2012*	75	38	89	34
Percent rural**	32.0%	50.7%	48.0%	43.8%

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau, undated.

* U.S. Census Bureau, 2017.

** U.S. Census Bureau, 2018.

Social issues are evident as well. For example, as shown at the bottom of Table 3.1, the teen birth rate is much higher than the rest of the state, particularly in Phillips County (164 per 1,000 aged 15–19 in 2016 and 89 per 1,000 aged 15–19 in 2012, compared with 28 and 34, respectively, in Arkansas as a whole). Another challenge facing the region, and particularly Phillips County, is a history of corruption in the justice system, as demonstrated in the well-known Operation Delta Blues scandal. This scandal is discussed in greater detail later in the report, but it is worth mentioning here because it reflects the broader issues in the region, as well as the damaged relationship between citizens and government institutions. Understandably, these economic and social conditions contribute to a context that is suitable for crime. While crime and public safety come to the forefront when there are social issues, solutions must address these underlying problems directly by leveraging local strengths and assets (e.g., government and community).

Official Crime Statistics

Violent crime in the two counties is very high, although a lack of publicly available statistics makes it difficult to quantify. According to UCR data, in 2015–2016, the violent crime rate in Helena-West Helena was two to three times higher than the state average (FBI, 2015). In 2015, Helena-West Helena’s murder rate that was nine times higher than the state average (at 5.4 per 10,000); had it been included in any city ranking of homicide rates, it would have come in third, after St. Louis (5.9 per 10,000) and Baltimore (5.5 per 10,000) and before Detroit (4.4 per 10,000). It is more difficult to get official statistics from Coahoma County, but, according to the data gathered from Baldwin’s project, the violent crime rate in Clarksdale was 23 percent higher than Helena-West Helena (193.6 versus 149.5 per 10,000; Baldwin, Brown, and Jones, 2016).

The CDC also collects mortality data, which list cause of death assigned by the coroners, but which likely undercounts the true homicide rate. Using data from 2012–2016, homicide rates in each county were very high (CDC, 2018). In Phillips County, the five-year homicide rate was 2.9 per 10,000, which is 2.6 times higher than the state average of 1.1. Coahoma County’s homicide rate for the same period was 3.5 per 10,000, which is 2.9 times higher than the state average.

Phillips and Coahoma County’s homicide rates were 4.1 and 5.0 times higher than the U.S. average.

Phillips County

There are no publicly available county-level estimates of crime for Phillips County, but the two largest cities did provide crime numbers to the FBI in both 2015 and 2016 (no city-level numbers have been publicly released for 2017, but a review of media accounts suggests they will be higher than in 2015 and 2016) (Hogan, 2017). Helena-West Helena experienced a much higher crime rate than the rest of the county across virtually all categories—in 2016, the overall violence and property crime rates were higher in Helena-West Helena, with aggravated assault, robbery, and burglary rates over two times higher than the state average (FBI, 2015; see Table 3.2). These trends were even more exaggerated in 2015, with certain crime rate categories in Helena-West Helena being over nine times higher than the state average. Official statistics suffer several limitations, as they require the community to report the crimes and the police to record them and send them to the FBI for compilation, so they are not always entirely accurate. However, they still provide valuable evidence that crime in Helena-West Helena is much higher than the rest of the state, with peaks in homicide rates that are more similar to the most dangerous urban cities in the United States than their surrounding area.

Table 3.2. FBI Crime Statistics for Arkansas and Helena-West Helena, 2015 and 2016

Place	Year	Violent Crime	Murder/ Nonnegligent Manslaughter	Aggravated Assault	Robbery	Property Crime	Burglary	Larceny- Theft
Arkansas	2016	55.10	0.72	40.1	7.1	326.9	79.6	223.4
Helena- West Helena	2016	112.86	0	81.67	16.52	451.56	166.10	258.76
Arkansas	2015	52.1	0.61	38.0	7.0	325.2	76.0	229.8
Helena- West Helena	2015	149.54	5.40	109.00	23.42	554.00	184.67	339.61

NOTE: All numbers reflect the rate per 10,000 citizens.
SOURCE: FBI, 2015.

Examining the data a little further using NIBRS, the distribution of crimes and arrests by race was compared with the census figures. In 2016, the racial breakdown of Phillips County was 62 percent black and 35 percent white, but the black arrest rate was much higher than the black proportion of the population in all categories except shoplifting (see Table 3.3). This disparity is because of a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, a difference in the way crimes are committed that influences the ability of the police to close a case, bias in the criminal justice system, or black residents committing crimes at a higher rate. There is no way to determine which explanation is most accurate from these statistics alone.

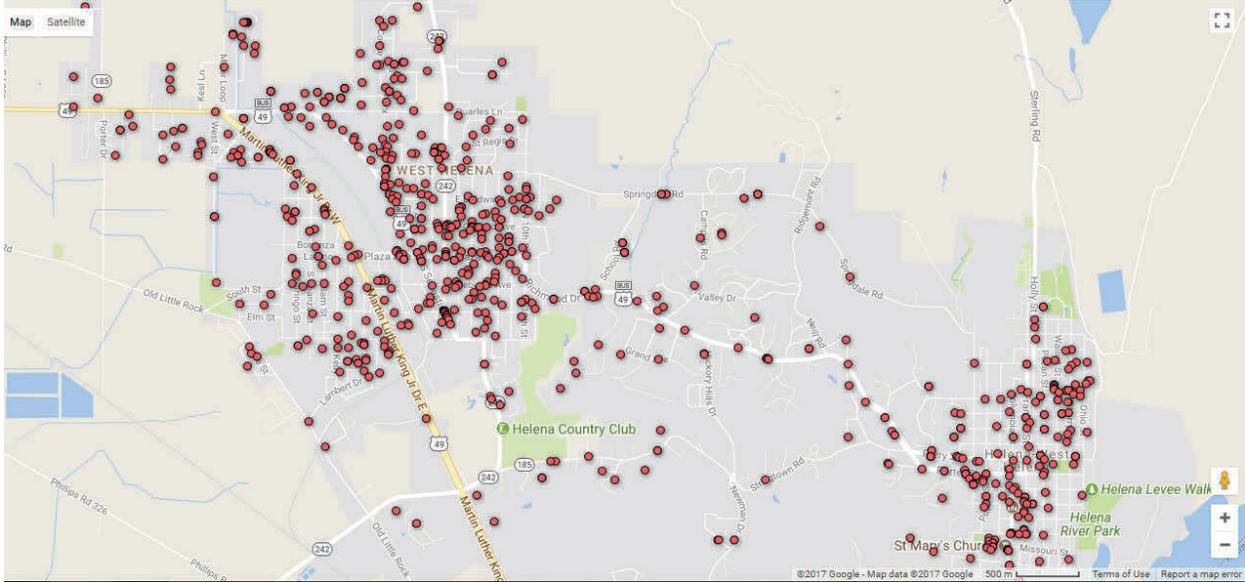
Table 3.3. 2015 Helena-West Helena Police Department Reports

Offense Type	Total Reported Crime in NIBRS	Arrests: Black/African American (%)	Arrests: White (%)
Aggravated assault	91	92.86	5.36
All other larceny	182	80.77	19.23
Arson	6	82.14	17.86
Burglary/breaking and entering	220	100	0
Drug equipment violations	10	80.56	13.89
Drug/narcotic violations	41	100	0
Motor vehicle theft	35	100	0
Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter	5	100	0
Other offense	415	90.48	6.35
Pocket-picking	2		
Purse-snatching	2		
Rape	10	100	0
Robbery	26	90	10
Shoplifting	139	63.58	33.77
Simple assault	201	89.66	7.76
Sodomy	3	100	0
Theft from building	20	100	0
Theft from motor vehicle	38	100	0
Theft of motor vehicle parts/accessories	8		
Weapon law violations	58	84.62	7.69

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015.

The Helena-West Helena Police Department provided data to the project team to examine the geographic concentration of crime within the city boundaries. Figure 3.2 presents an initial attempt to understand the available data and capabilities of the Helena-West Helena Police Department. It should not be used to draw conclusions about crime locations or potential solutions, since several key inputs were not provided, including the type of crimes or date ranges included in this crime map. Similar to most cities, the majority of crimes are concentrated to a few more densely populated areas. The geography of Helena-West Helena presents an interesting case for crime problem solving, since crimes may vary somewhat by area (Helena versus West Helena) because of differences in population or criminal opportunity. Interestingly, the hot spots identified by police—and that show up in this map—are near the Helena-West Helena police station (on Plaza Avenue), which is just off Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (Highway 49). Such concentrations of crime are expected and provide a basis for many of the problem-solving strategies we discuss in the following chapter (Weisburd, 2015).

Figure 3.2. Crime Hot-Spot Map of Helena-West Helena



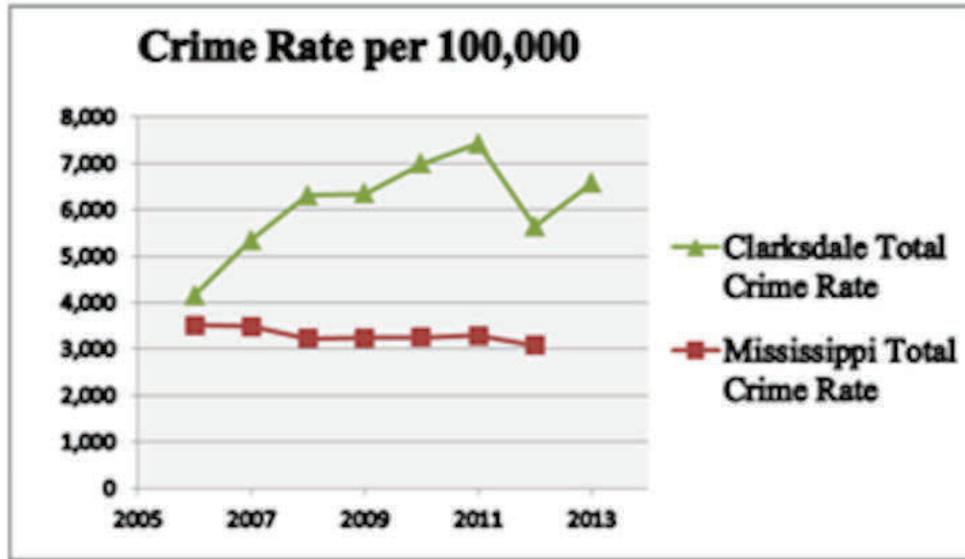
SOURCE: Helena-West Helena Police Department, geocoded crime extract provided to RAND Corporation, 2017.

Coahoma County

We were unable to gather official crime statistics from any of the Coahoma County criminal justice system agencies due to their declination to participate in this project. Therefore, we relied on information collected and analyzed by Julie Baldwin for her project with the Clarksdale Police Department (Baldwin, Brown, and Jones, 2016). The remainder of this section on the crime statistics in Coahoma County is excerpted from an ongoing research project in the community led by Baldwin, which began in March 2014. She worked closely with Coahoma Police Department, which shared data with her. These results come from data associated with a larger project that focused on criminal hot spots; only the data and methods related to the results presented herein are reviewed. The data were collected a few years prior to our current study, and there is no way to assess if or how crime has changed in the intervening years without access to the current numbers. The remainder of this section on Coahoma County crime was authored by Baldwin.

Coahoma County is one of the most crime-ridden counties in Mississippi; its county seat, Clarksdale, has approximately twice the crime rate of the state on average (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3. Crime Rate in Clarksdale Versus the Mississippi State Average



SOURCE: Baldwin, Brown, and Jones, 2016.

During 2013–2014, 543 property felonies and 159 violent crimes were officially recorded in Clarksdale (Baldwin, Brown, and Jones, 2016). Burglary was the most prevalent property crime at the felony level, and assaultive offenses (aggravated and domestic violence) were the violent crimes most frequently reported. Preliminary analysis indicated that the Brickyard neighborhood is a hot spot for crime in Clarksdale. Approximately 16 percent of Clarksdale’s 18,092 residents reside in the Brickyard neighborhood. Driven primarily by gangs and juveniles, crime in the Brickyard neighborhood is 28 percent of Clarksdale’s violent crime and 29 percent of its property crime (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. Violent Crime and Calls for Service by Neighborhood Within the Brickyard Community and in Clarksdale, Mississippi, as a Whole

	2013	2014	Total
Total Brickyard violent crime	87	72	159
Total Clarksdale violent crime	257	315	572
Percentage of violent crime in Brickyard	34%	23%	28%
Total Brickyard felony property crime	295	248	543
Total Clarksdale felony property crime	920	967	1,887
Percentage of felony property crime in Brickyard	32%	26%	29%
Total Brickyard	382	320	702
Total Clarksdale	1,177	1,282	2,459
Percentage of total	32%	25%	29%

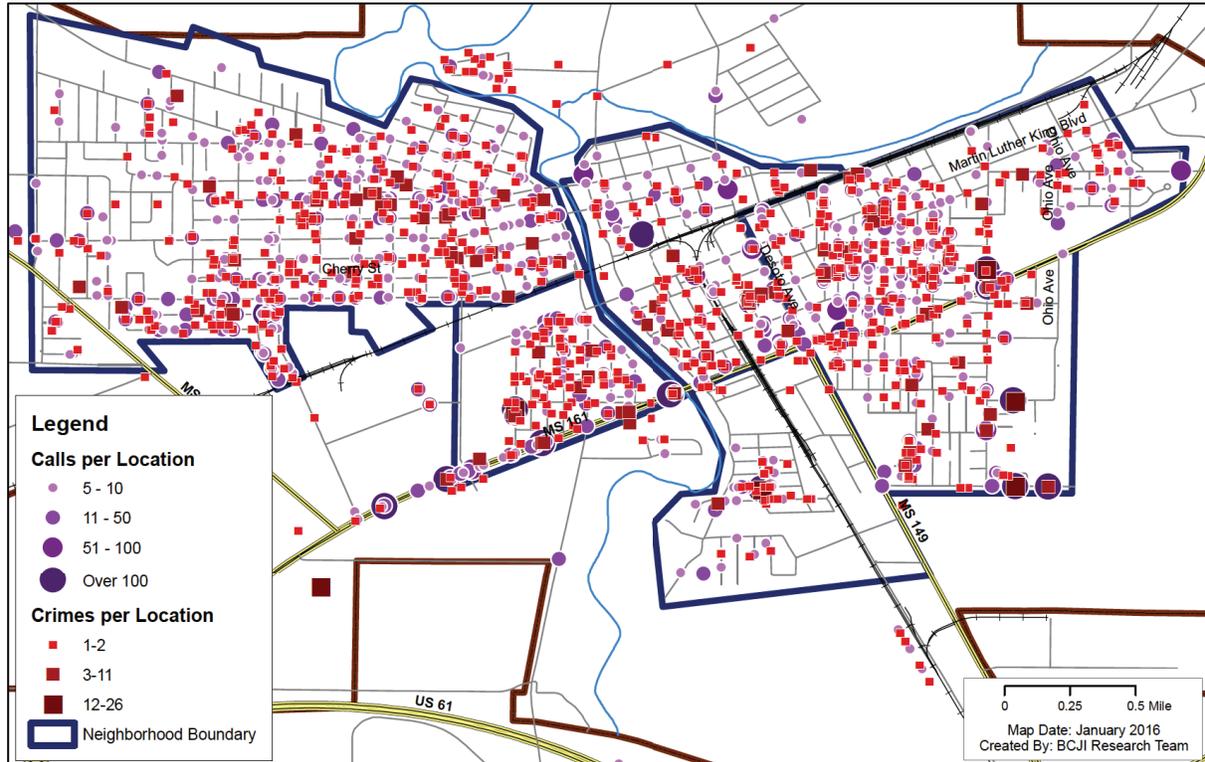
SOURCE: Baldwin, Brown, and Jones, 2016.

Hot Spots (Geographic Areas of High-Crime Intensity)

To identify hot spots and problem locations, graduated symbol maps were created, and all calls for service were analyzed. We realized specific locations were identified as problems based on certain call types such as “escort” (law enforcement called to provide security for an establishment’s money drop). Therefore, the analyses were re-run with the exclusion of “escort” and a few other call types deemed inconsequential to recreate maps identifying citizen-generated problem locations. Violent crime data were then overlaid to determine locations that had both high citizen calls and high violent crimes. These locations were also examined in relation to community supervision individuals, neighborhood demographics (by census block group), problem properties (e.g., vacant properties, abandoned vehicles), and resources. As more-specific target areas were identified, additional maps and analyses were completed.

Analyses revealed concentrated hotspots within the Brickyard community and in adjacent communities. Figure 3.4 depicts the violent crimes and calls for services in the neighborhood for 2013–2014.

Figure 3.4. Violent Crime and Calls for Service by Neighborhood (Years 2013, 2014)



SOURCE: Baldwin et al., 2016.

Community Descriptions of Crime

Understanding which types of crime are most problematic is crucial for developing a crime-reduction strategy. Additionally, it is important to consider other features of crime or the context surrounding criminal activity, including whether it is increasing or decreasing, where it occurs, who is responsible, and who the victims are. The following interpretations of the crime problems in the Delta come from interviews ($n = 15$) and focus groups (numbers of groups = 4, number of people = 51) with community members and interviews with government officials ($n = 9$). The community members who participated in interviews were more likely to hold business or leadership positions in faith-based organizations, social service departments, and educational institutions, but they did not necessarily live in the area. Focus group members had to be residents of the area and tended not to be business owners or be involved in leadership positions in community agencies.

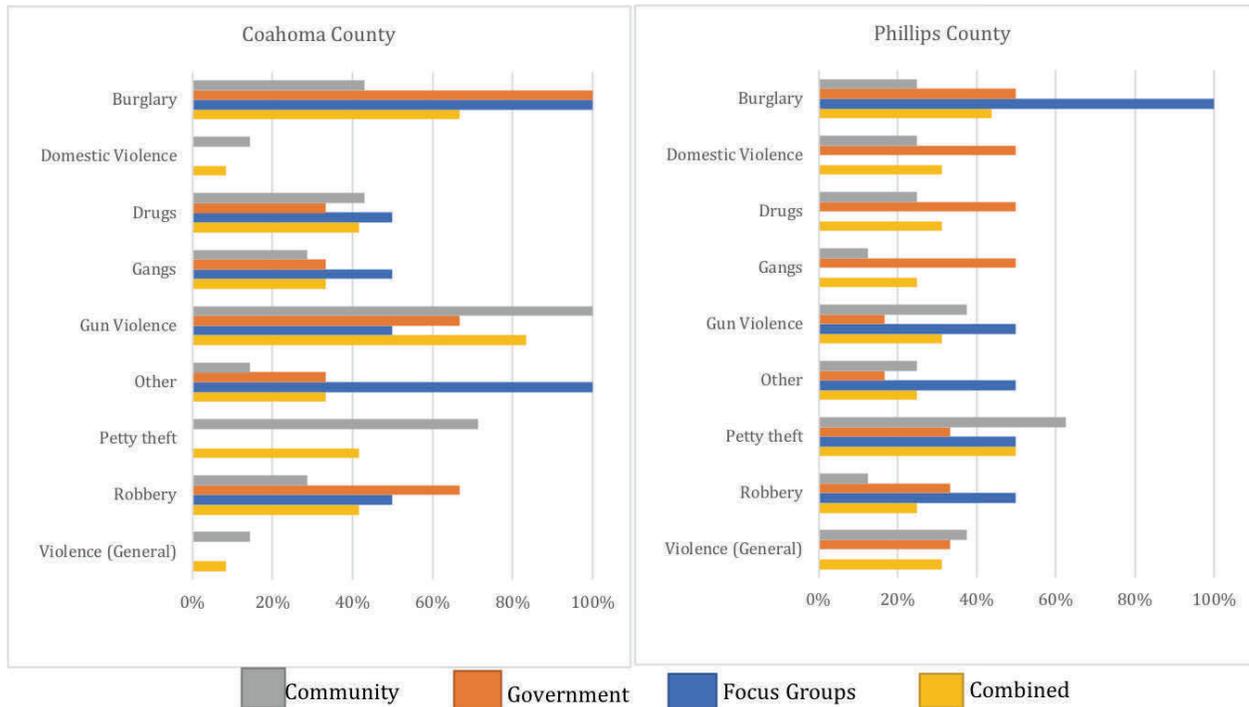
Types of Crime

While the crime problems identified by community members and government officials may not correspond directly to the official data, their perspectives help identify the concerns of the

community and provide more context regarding the nature of the crimes committed in Coahoma and Phillips Counties.

Across all respondents and focus groups in both counties, burglary and gun violence were cited most often as major crime problems (Figure 3.5). Burglary was mentioned slightly less frequently in Phillips (44 percent) than Coahoma County (67 percent), as was gun violence (31 percent versus 83 percent, respectively). Next, petty theft was another frequently mentioned crime problem in both Coahoma (42 percent) and Phillips Counties (50 percent). Notably, of those who identified petty theft as an issue, most were community members. Other major crime problems included robbery (42 percent in Coahoma County, 25 percent in Phillips County) and drugs (42 percent in Coahoma County, 31 percent in Phillips County), followed by gangs (33 percent in Coahoma County, 25 percent in Phillips County). In both counties, robbery and gangs were more of a concern to government officials than community members, and concerns about drugs were similar across government officials and community members. One notable county-level difference involves the identification of domestic violence as a problem. Only one respondent in Coahoma County (8 percent) mentioned domestic violence, while 31 percent of Phillips County respondents thought domestic violence was an issue. Lastly, general violence was mentioned more often in Phillips County (31 percent) compared with Coahoma County (8 percent). This category reflects mentions of violence that were nonspecific or less life-threatening forms of violence (e.g., assault without a firearm).

Figure 3.5. Perceptions of Crime by Community and Data Source



Regarding changes in crime over time, many government officials who discussed changes in the crime rate or types of crime did not feel that crime was increasing, and some did not consider crime to be as big of an issue as it seemed. Community residents, however, sometimes perceived crime to be increasing in severity and/or boldness. Specifically, they noted increases in gun violence and the perception that drug dealers were not worried about being arrested. Increases in the number or visibility of gangs and access to guns were often associated with increases in gun violence. One resident sums this up by explaining,

[T]his has been a gradual change. Gun violence [is] due to gangs and drugs. They are selling drugs out in the open; they aren't afraid of the police. They sell to anyone. They don't fear the police, they don't think they will [go] to jail or if they do, they won't stay long.

Where Crime Is Happening

The perception in the community that crime is increasing or out of control was explained by some government officials as an artifact of the geographic spread of crime across the community. As one government official put it, “It’s just a small community . . . there is no socioeconomic separation, and there is no good or bad side of town . . . it feels like a lot [of crime] because it is everywhere and people can’t escape it.” Another government official echoed this sentiment by noting that, “over the past few years, some of this is going to other parts of town. Some neighborhoods have hired their own security.” A community member also noted this, saying

[i]t used to be we had sacred communities, but now there are no more sacred communities. When you buy a home now you have to look long and close and you still may end up with crime in your area.

Despite this sense that crime is widespread, respondents were also aware of specific places where crime tends to concentrate (e.g., a club in the county, specific streets). A high concentration of crime in specific places (e.g., intersections, streets) is common in criminological research (Weisburd, 2015), as a few places often account for a disproportionate amount of crime (e.g., 3 percent of street segments account for over half of gun violence in Boston (Braga, Papachristos, and Hureau, 2009). In addition, such specific areas often have stable levels of high crime over time (Weisburd et al., 2004).

Positively, investments in certain areas have seemingly improved what were once perceived as crime-prone areas. In particular, a downtown development in Clarksdale is perceived by community members to have reduced car thefts and purse snatching, possibly because of increased traffic and lighting improvements. The same sentiment toward improved safety in the downtown area was echoed at least once in Helena-West Helena. As one local business owner discussed,

[W]hen we opened our first business downtown in [19]99, we had to hire private security every day of the week just to protect our patrons just getting out of the car. Downtown back then was a lot rougher than it is now . . . the fact that you have private security there means you send out a signal that we're not going to put up with this.

The same respondent noted that conditions have improved, and they no longer have a need for private security.

Who Is Involved in Crime

Much like the concentration of crime in certain places, repeat offenders often account for a disproportionate amount of crime, and successful interventions must address who is committing the most crime (Sherman, 2007). Regarding perceived perpetrators, community members tended to focus on issues with juvenile offenders, particularly those involved in gangs. The same theme followed for government officials. Many of the issues with youth seemed to stem from problematic household conditions (e.g., poverty, lack of supervision, family criminal involvement), which contribute to the lure of gang membership. One respondent characterized youth crime as involving

break-ins and robberies stemming from the youth. I would say starting at 12 probably through 20. These kids trying to have everything they see on TV and their parents can't afford to get it for them.

Next, there was a sense that gang members were involved in disorganized, sporadic criminal activity, rather than acting in cohesive groups with set agendas. One resident observed, "It's gangs but on a much lower and unsophisticated level. More just groups of kids who get

together.” For government officials, this perception of disorganization among the gangs was mixed across county lines, with Coahoma County officials reporting more organization to their gangs (e.g., official names with national affiliates) compared with Phillips County (e.g., “they engage in drive-bys sometimes and occasionally help each other”). Many respondents pointed to gang member involvement in violent incidents.

Like repeat offenders, there also tended to be repeat victims, and there was often a substantial degree of overlap between offenders and victims (Tewksbury and Mustaine, 2000; Thornberry and Krohn, 2003b). There were few mentions of victims of crime in our interviews or focus groups, but the few mentions suggested a trend of young females being sexually exploited for money by gangs or older men. Other respondents noted the race of victims, particularly victims of violence, to be predominantly African American.

Causes and Contributors of Crime and Violence

While understanding the nature of the crime problem (i.e., what, where, and who) is important for developing possible interventions, understanding the underlying factors that contribute to the crime problem is also critical. Representatives from each county, which included stakeholders and community members, identified six major categories of contributors to crime in their communities, including inadequate family and community support; lack of economic opportunity; government system failure; limited social programs and services; failing schools, and outmigration and urban decay. Table 3.5 describes each category and associated cause of crime, including how many different interviews and focus groups described each theme.

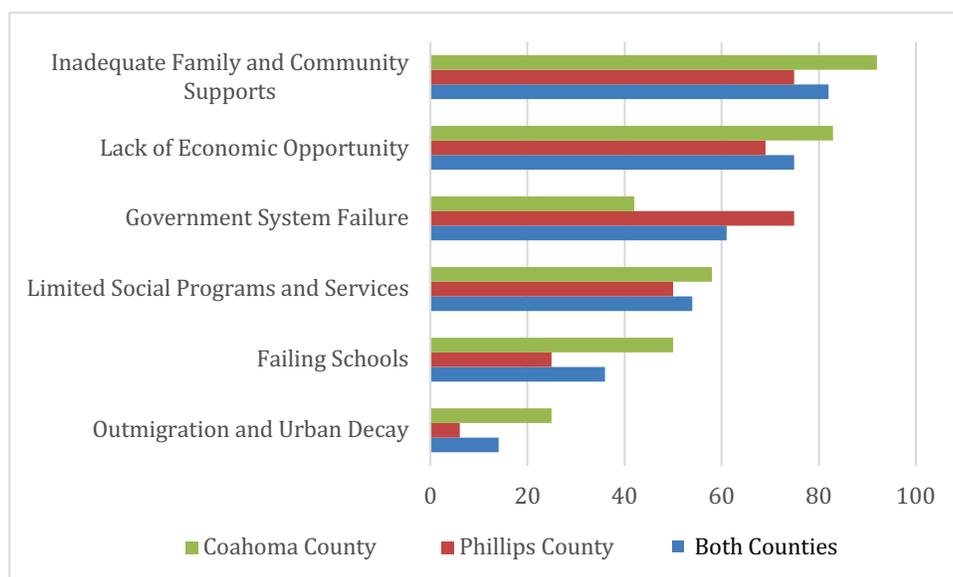
Table 3.5. Contributors of Crime

Type of Crime Contributor	Crime Contributor	Description of Crime Contributor
Inadequate family and community support <i>n</i> = 23	Family instability	Comments reference lack of parental supervision, kids raising themselves, single parenting, teen parenting, multiple children
	Lack of community cohesion	Comments on the absence of a sense of unity or community engagement or parental involvement
	Negative social norms	Comments such as “students looking up to drug dealers”; “girls having babies to get a check”; “can’t pass a drug screen”; “bravado or needing to prove or protect oneself”
	Racial tension	Perceived or real racism or segregation
	Gangs	Comments referencing gang involvement as a surrogate for family support
Lack of economic opportunity <i>n</i> = 21	Financial hardship	Comments referencing crime due to not having enough money for food or other essentials
	Lack of job opportunities or training	Comments regarding limited job opportunities resulting in engagement in criminal activities
	Illicit economy	Comments on selling drugs as a means of income

Type of Crime Contributor	Crime Contributor	Description of Crime Contributor
Government system failure <i>n</i> = 17	Poor judicial or governmental system	Comments about corruption or distrust, no jail, no or limited consequences, staff-capacity issues
Limited social programs and services <i>n</i> = 15	Lack of community amenities	Comments regarding lack of “things to do” such as an absence of stores, restaurants, and movie theaters
	Lack of or inadequate social programs	Comments on the absence or quality of social programs
	Unmet mental health needs	Mentions of mental health as a contributing factor to crime or describes incident(s) involving mental health issues
Failing schools <i>n</i> = 10	Poor education system	Indicators of poor education outcomes results from the quality of the education system
Outmigration and urban decay <i>n</i> = 4	Outmigration	Comments referencing people leaving the community for work, school, better opportunities, etc. Also comments on companies/employers leaving the area
	Urban decay	Blight, abandoned buildings, poor lighting

The following contributors of crime were the most frequently discussed: inadequate family and community support, limited economic opportunities, and insufficient social programs and services, followed closely by failing schools. Less than half of the interviewees in Coahoma County discussed issues with the government system or outmigration and urban decay. The most-commonly discussed contributors to crime in Phillips County mirrored those raised in Coahoma County, except the failings of the government system was the second-most frequently discussed issue. In addition, school system concerns, as well as outmigration and urban decay, were mentioned by less than half of the interviewees in Phillips County. Figure 3.6 highlights the differences in perceptions about key crime contributors across the counties.

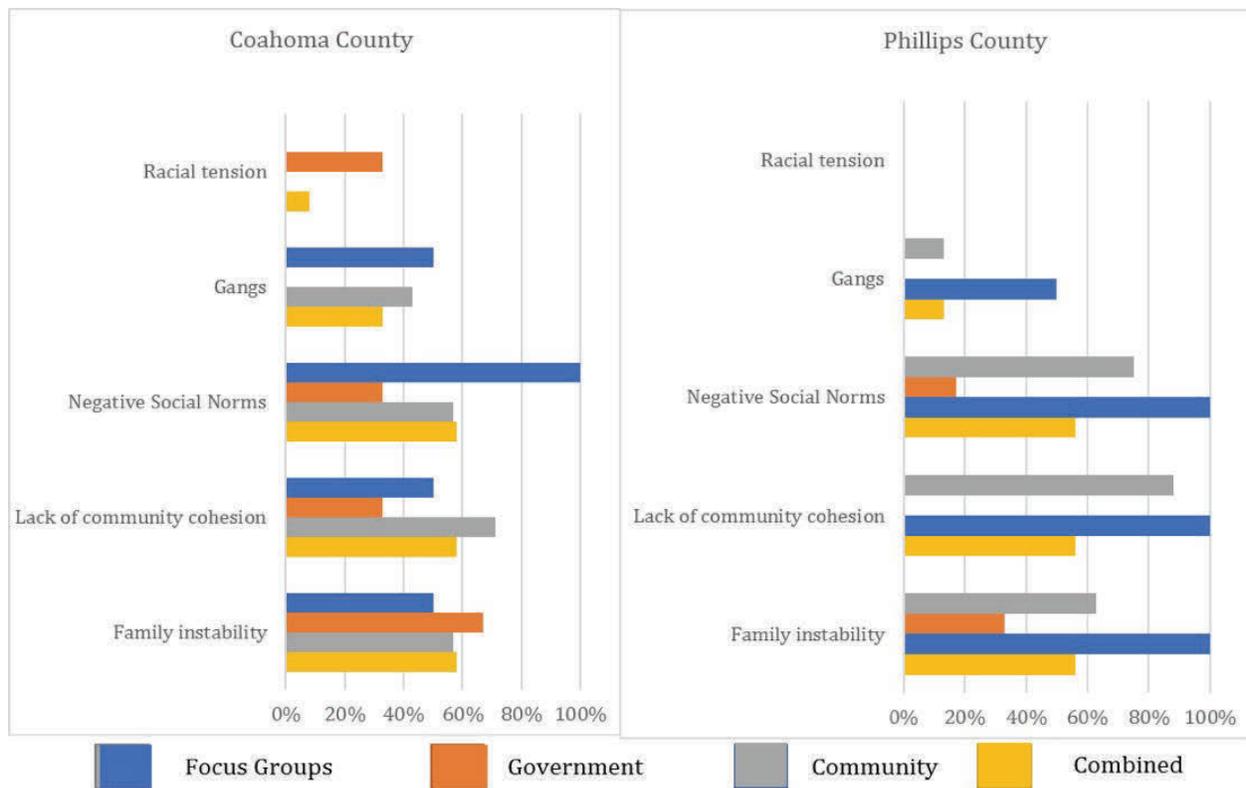
Figure 3.6. Percentage of Interviewees Who Discussed Key Categories of Crime Contributors



Inadequate Family and Community Support

Across counties, the most-frequently discussed crime contributors fell into the inadequate family and community support category, which included family instability, lack of community cohesion, negative social norms, gang involvement, and racial tension (see Figure 3.7). There was minimal variation between counties’ perceptions of these contributors to crime; however, gang involvement and racial tension were discussed more frequently in Coahoma County than in Phillips County.

Figure 3.7. Inadequate Family and Community Support Subthemes



Family instability included comments that described parents—often young, single mothers—who lacked knowledge, experience, or inclination to instill appropriate values in their children or provide sufficient oversight of their children’s behavior. A common phrase cited during the interviews was “children are raising themselves.” As a result of limited guidance and supervision, children drop out of school and engage in criminal activities. One respondent described the personal impact of lack of guidance:

Well, me growing up with just my mom—I lost my older brother when I was 15 and he was 18—I lost my guidance. I never had no type of guidance and you hear about kids raising themselves and that’s what’s going on. I had my mom but I had to teach myself right from wrong.

Another respondent discussed the relationship between parenting and engagement in criminal activities:

Most of these kids are not getting any parenting. I was afraid of my father growing up. I knew there would be consequences, and I wanted to make my parents proud too. Now these kids are selling drugs, and the parents are taking their drug money, and they know they’re living that lifestyle.

Lack of community cohesion is another challenge to the informal social system in Coahoma and Phillips Counties. Interviewees described communities that are fractured along several lines (e.g., race, social programs, churches, government officials) and the need for improved coordination and communication among the various factions. County residents observe an example of lack of community pride, responsibility, and accountability, which can contribute to some community members aligning themselves with gangs who portray group unity and support. One quote illustrates this point:

You have kids expressing natural needs, but no one’s answering them except the gangs, then they join the gang and then you’re loyal to the gang and not the community, so that decreases unity.

Discussions on *negative social norms* highlighted a sense of community apathy or complacency with the status quo. Comments described crime as “normalized,” “socially acceptable,” and even “idolized.” Interviewees explain that youth routinely see parents, drug dealers, and gang members engaged in criminal activity, which glorifies and desensitizes them to crime. In addition, guns are ubiquitous and commonly used as a means to solve disputes or demonstrate “manhood.” One respondent described this phenomenon:

I hear about a mentality in . . . that you had to be tough and have a gun . . . I think that the perception promoted in the country about black manhood is super potent here because it’s such a small town . . . [This city] was an easy target for that type of thinking. . . . [I]f you have children growing up without the positive male presence, they’re very easy subjects to fall victim to that idea of who they have to be.

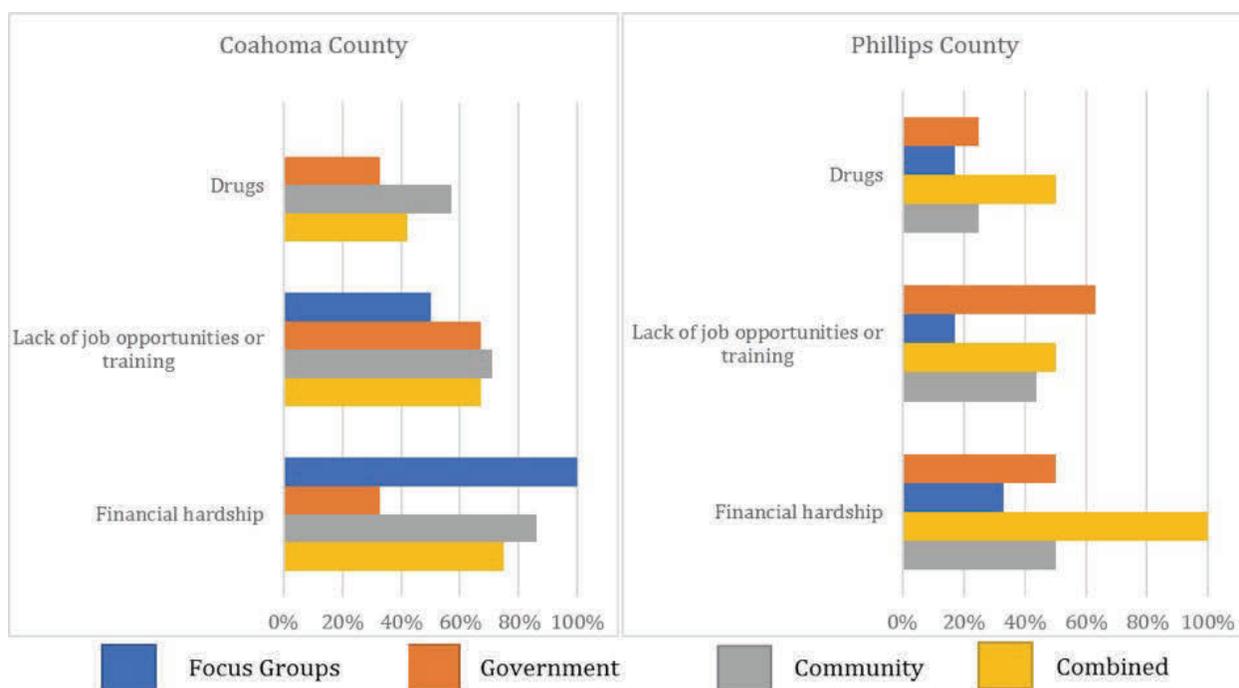
While comments on gang involvement described the gang members’ criminal activities in the community (e.g., drug dealing, gun violence), interviewees also emphasized the relationship between youths’ need to belong and be protected with the proliferation of gangs in the communities. One respondent said, “They’re driven by the need to belong and have a sense of belonging, by the need to be protected if you’re in a dangerous environment, but even more so everybody needs sense of belonging.” Another echoed this point: “Some of the reasons they said they joined the gangs were to feel comfortable with others instead of being out there by yourself.”

Finally, while racial segregation in social settings was frequently mentioned by county representatives, few associated race with crime. Comments about racial tension and crime noted that oppression and repression of African Americans contributed to crime.

Lack of Economic Opportunity

The second-most commonly discussed contributor to crime in Coahoma County, and third-most discussed in Phillips County, was a lack of economic opportunities. This category included comments on financial hardship, lack of job opportunities or training, and drugs (see Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8. Lack of Economic Opportunity Subthemes



Comments about *financial hardship*, *lack of job opportunities*, and *drugs* underscored the connection between poverty and crime. One respondent succinctly said, “If you take away a man’s job—this applies to women too, but to men in particular—you take away his desire to act good.” Most interviewees explained that, because of limited financial resources and scarce job opportunities, individuals commit such crimes as burglary, selling drugs, and prostitution to meet their financial needs. One quote illustrates this point:

Crime is because they need money. They have trouble getting legitimate jobs because they can’t pass a drug test, they are felons, and factories are gone. The only way they can survive is to sell drugs or to steal from the neighborhood.

Comments specifically related to job opportunities indicate that there is an inadequate supply of jobs due to employers (e.g., factories, chemical plants) moving out from the area. In addition,

job candidates have limited skills and face logistical barriers to employment, such as limited transportation and child care. One respondent described these challenges:

We have one client who works at McDonalds, but it's 50 minutes away. And during that time you're away from your children, too. There are just not things available in reach. You can cross the border and work at the casino, but you still have to have transportation and have a clean record. If you mess up your record early, you can't get a job. Walmart is the only job really here in town. There's no in between, really.

Finally, most comments related to drugs echoed the earlier point that selling drugs provides an income source to impoverished residents. However, one respondent commented that drugs can lead to other crimes:

I think drugs are a domino effect of all the things we're talking about . . . It's a causative agent in just about everything you do. I won't say it's because people are poor, because they've been poor all my life. But what has changed is we have had an influx and more accessibility to drugs.

Government System Failure

The second-most commonly discussed contributor to crime in Phillips County was government system failure, which includes comments on deficiencies in the judicial or government system. Less than half of the interviewees in Coahoma County discussed this issue. Across the two counties, interviewees' comments related to the poor judicial or government system noted that resources for law enforcement are inadequate, which results in insufficient staff, training, and equipment. In addition, representatives from both counties expressed distrust of law enforcement and commented that the system is too lenient in favor of individuals who commit crime. Phillips County interviewees cite system breakdowns at all levels: Law enforcement staff are overwhelmed and unable to produce quality paperwork by requisite deadlines, prosecutors are understaffed and unable to meet filing deadlines, and the judge is too lenient. Respondents argued that because of these system failures and the absence of a jail in Phillips County, criminals are released from custody and undeterred from committing crime. One quote summarized this point:

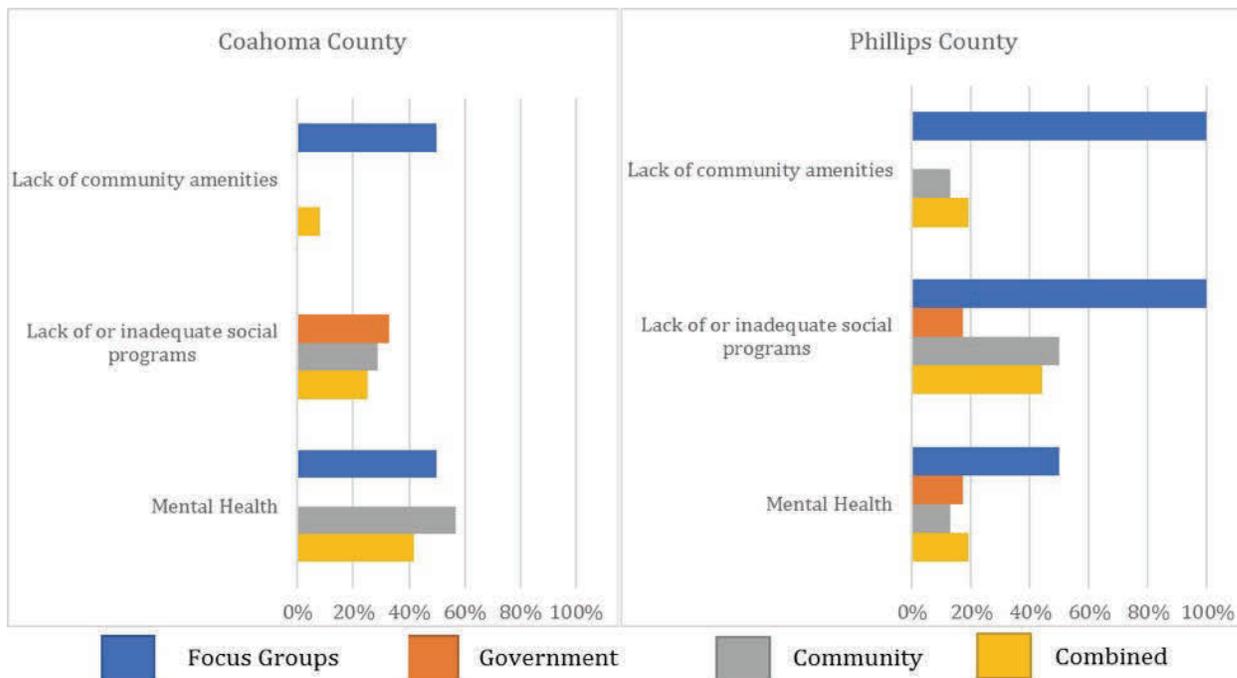
Most of our problems are systematic in nature. If someone commits a crime, then what do you do with them, because we don't have a jail. So they get released. It used to be a very lenient system where they were let off.

Limited Social Programs and Services

The third-most commonly discussed contributor to crime in Coahoma County (fourth-most in Phillips County) was limited social programs and services, including mental health, social programs, and community amenities (see Figure 3.9). Mental health concerns were more frequently discussed in Coahoma County than in Phillips County. Conversely, lack of or

inadequate social programs was discussed more frequently in Phillips County than in Coahoma County.

Figure 3.9. Limited Social Programs and Services Subthemes



Comments related to all three crime contributors include beliefs that people commit crime because of mental health issues and young people engage in criminal activities because they do not have healthy alternatives. Interviewees noted that because of limited resources, the quality of mental health care is subpar. One respondent said, “We can’t forget about mental health disorders and how people are just out here on their own and the treatment and the resources just are not there.” In addition, youth often lack adequate or quality social programs (e.g., after-school programming, mentoring) and community amenities (e.g., transportation, movie theaters, bowling alleys). In fact, the lack of transportation prevents many youth from using the programs that are available, such as the Boys and Girls Club. One quote illustrates this point:

A lot of people, when they do go to school, when they get out, you look around, and they don’t got anything else to do, they can’t go to an arcade or shoot pool. Kids be wanting to hang out and there’s nothing for them to do.

Failing Schools

The fourth-most commonly discussed contributor to crime in Coahoma County (fifth most in Phillips County) was failing schools, which included comments on the poor education system. Interviewees cited low high school graduation rates and low standardized test scores as evidence of the poor education systems in both counties. In addition, in Phillips County, the school system

was taken over by the state because it did not meet required standards. Multiple comments attribute the low quality of education to an inability to recruit quality teachers. Per one interviewee, “When we try to recruit quality teachers, people don’t want to move here; they want to leave here. People who do grow up here and get educated, they don’t want to come back here. It’s hard to recruit and retain talent.” In addition, interviewees noted that resources are limited because there are too many schools—the result of efforts to maintain racial segregation. One respondent described this issue:

And another thing in Mississippi is that we have too many superintendents and way too many schools. They need to join the schools, and anyone working in the school system would agree. The schools are pretty segregated.

Outmigration and Urban Decay

The crime contributor that was least frequently discussed out of the identified themes in both counties was outmigration and urban decay. More interviewees in Coahoma County than in Phillips County perceived these issues as contributors to crime. Comments related to outmigration discussed difficulty retaining the “best and the brightest” residents in Coahoma County. These individuals perceive that opportunities are better in other communities, so they leave. In addition, interviewees described how urban decay stimulates crime in both counties. One government official summarized:

Blighted properties create a bad atmosphere in the community. It signals bad things going on in the area and so you avoid it. The numbered streets in West Helena, people know you don’t drive the numbered streets and a lot of it is blight. Blighted properties are used to store contraband of various types and people know that and don’t want to be there. Dealers rob each other. Illicit parties are held at these properties.

Current Approaches and Community Recommendations to Address Crime

Current Approaches

The current approaches to addressing crime were collected from government officials, community stakeholders, and community members who participated in the focus groups. The representatives described a variety of crime-reduction strategies and social programs, as well as the barriers to effective implementation. In addition, they shared their perceptions about what works and does not. There is more information about Phillips County because more data were collected from that community; Coahoma County government officials declined to participate in our interviews. The lack of discussion should not be interpreted as this county performing better or worse in terms of addressing crime and violence.

Phillips County Government Addressing Crime and Violence

In terms of approaches that directly address crime and violence, the government officials reported several different strategies being implemented by the local criminal justice system, including drug courts, various multiagency task forces that target gangs and/or drugs, training local police officers in various technologies to aid criminal investigations, installing cameras, bringing police officers into the schools, and neighborhood patrols. They also reported initiatives that are just starting, such as a school resource officer program and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE). The criminal justice system's ability to prevent, control, and respond to crime was reported to have some success, but the shortcomings of current approaches and barriers to adequately addressing crime dominated the conversations. Specifically, funding shortfalls, inadequate resources, and lack of human capital reportedly prevent the criminal justice system from functioning as intended. The new police chief, who was still in his first year in the position, is starting a variety of new programs, but they had not been implemented by this project's data-collection period.

Phillips County Government System as Barrier to Delivering Effective Services

In Phillips County, government system failure was reported from the top down, including a history of corruption in the city council and dysfunction across all criminal justice system agencies. (In Coahoma County, residents and stakeholders also reported problems with local government, including a contentious mayoral election and lack of response by county government officials, leading to some residents to report feeling disenfranchised.)

Commenters in Phillips County described the city council as corrupt, untrustworthy, and unwilling to do what is necessary to improve public safety. However, they were optimistic about the new chief of police and hopeful that he would receive the necessary support and resources to improve the department. One respondent said:

The city council is probably still fighting with each other about people being on the board. They have issues they have to fix before they can help the community. They been in the news for years, and it's embarrassing. It looks like they arrest more people at the city meetings than in the town. So people don't respect the city officials because you see what they're doing in the news—they're not setting good examples.

Several sources reported that there have been serious problems within the local and county law enforcement agencies and the court system, and the lack of a local correctional institution has presented additional challenges. The largest police department in the county has suffered from political infighting, high turnover, and corruption, which has left it with few officers with the necessary experience to conduct investigations. According to several interviewees, the police do not consistently enforce crime, do not always respond to calls for service, and lack professionalism. The lack of proficiency within the police department has reportedly prevented several high-profile cases from being prosecuted, further damaging their reputation within the community. The department also has dozens of open cases for excessive use of force. The new

police chief is pursuing several avenues for making improvements in all these areas, including developing a defined career track for officers, encouraging continuing education through free courses at the local community college, providing training, modernizing policies and procedures, and creating a comprehensive community violence prevention plan.

Helena-West Helena Police Department is the largest, but not the only, municipal police department in Phillips County. Similar concerns about other municipal police departments in the county were not expressed; interviewees in these areas reported that crime there is very low and local police are satisfactory.

The problems in the largest law enforcement agency have impacted the county court system, which is similarly suffering from many challenges because of budget limitations, insufficient staffing for the case load, and a complicated schedule of rotating judges that make it difficult to process cases before a speedy trial clock expires. Coupled with the insufficient resources and a part-time prosecutor, the case backlog continues to grow, and numerous cases fall through the cracks. Additionally, a large number of people do not show up for their hearings, creating a long list of fugitive bench warrants that the county sheriff department must process with deficient resources. The county jail was shut down in 2013, which led to layoffs and public perception that criminals were no longer being held accountable; in actuality, it has shifted the responsibilities of the sheriff's department from housing and supervising inmates to transporting them long distances to neighboring county facilities. Still, there is a strong and pervasive belief that offenders are not being held accountable for their crimes because of a lack of a local jail, and that there is no punishment to deter criminals. The jail closing created an additional set of complications, as the sheriffs must travel long distances and reimburse the costs associated with incarceration to facilities outside their jurisdiction. Aside from the manpower required for these operations, it limits the inmates' access to their defense attorneys and makes it very difficult for their families to visit them. At the time of writing, a vote was planned on a measure to build a new jail.

A great deal of the criticism of law enforcement centered on the need for training and experienced officers. There were two primary explanations for the lack of experienced officers, the first being a recent change in administration and turnover in the department because of political and disciplinary issues over the past several years (in Helena-West Helena specifically). Another reason for the lack of experienced officers involved retention; cities in other areas of the state offer better incentives to attract new officers. Additionally, officers in the Delta region may become more attractive to larger municipal departments, since they tend to have experience across a broad range of enforcement or investigative duties (because of low budgets and short staffing).

The prosecutor's office has struggled because of issues in the police department, inefficiencies in the court system, and a lack of funding. Inexperienced police investigators may make errors in case processing that require multiple exchanges with the prosecutor. This also affects defense attorneys. For the prosecutor, this sometimes leads to dropped charges, increased

plea bargaining for reduced charges, or missing the 60-day window for formal charging. Other issues include a large fugitive docket, with fugitives not being picked up because of an issue with the filing system or the police missing people at their bond hearing who have cases on the docket. Since the bond hearing is nonadversarial, neither prosecutors nor defense attorneys are likely to be present. Prosecutorial issues with law enforcement seem to be improving or are on the verge of improving.

Additionally, the court system itself faces challenges. For instance, the prosecutor's office does not have access to the electronic court system. This lack of integration is a challenge for the prosecutorial staff, as they are part-time and maintain private practices away from the courthouse. Another court system challenge concerns court scheduling. The docket system has changed recently, with all five county judges now hearing cases. This has led to longer intervals for continuations of cases. This is currently recognized as an issue, and plans to change the current docket system may be in progress or beginning soon.

Community Approaches in Both Counties

Interviewees and focus group participants provided information about efforts to directly and indirectly address crime outside the formal criminal justice system. For example, there are community-based initiatives aimed at reducing crime in both Coahoma and Phillips Counties, including neighborhood watches and restarting the Crimestoppers program. These programs involve residents in helping police identify and solve crimes, and both communities are very supportive of these efforts. The most-frequently discussed efforts to reduce crime could be broadly described as social service-oriented rather than crime-focused. These programs aim to reduce risk factors for criminal involvement (and in some cases, reinvolved) and focus on three factors: (1) education and prosocial activities for youth, (2) parenting skills and family support, and (3) mental health and addiction services.

In terms of providing education and prosocial activities for youth, each community reported having several organizations and programs offering various services for youth. They described over a dozen programs to support youth that have been run through various community-based organizations, but several of them have been discontinued because of funding shortages. Community residents, government officials, and community stakeholders all reported that the local Boys and Girls Clubs and the community expo center are vital community resources for children, providing a variety of services, including recreation, mentoring, daycare, athletics, and nutrition, as well as an opportunity to determine if there are other unmet needs that need addressing. There was also mention of several other programs run through local churches, schools, private citizens/businesses, and community-based organizations. These programs focus on such activities as art, music, empowerment, social skill development, leadership, and tutoring/education. While discussions of these services were generally quite positive, there was a question of whether the most at-risk children were participating.

The two almost universally discussed barriers to service delivery to those most at risk were a lack of transportation and the challenge of providing age-appropriate activities, particularly for youths after they reach adolescence. These services are seen as vital but insufficient, as there are still large numbers of youths who are not engaged in positive activities and are at higher risk for being involved in gang activity. Additionally, many of the staff responsible for providing services do not receive training to deliver all the services required by a high-need population, such as nursing, social work, and psychology. There was a perceived lack of supportive services for justice-involved youth, who are sometimes not eligible to participate in other social or educational programs.

The communities reported the existence of some organizations that address family issues, such as poverty, parenting skills, and job training. A few programs tried to provide childcare, education and General Educational Development (GED) programming, parenting skills, and job training to teenage mothers. There are other GED programs and various services offered through local churches, but in general, interviewees and focus group members did not discuss the availability or effectiveness of community-based social services for adults when asked about the resources available to prevent and address crime. Some interviewees reported that they were working on creating more vocational education and apprenticeship opportunities to help build the workforce and address chronic and multigenerational poverty. However, government officials reported that when residents receive training and build desirable job skills, they often leave to pursue better opportunities elsewhere, so they understand that developing opportunities is equally important to build local human capital.

Finally, while both communities described limited available services that address mental health issues and addiction issues, the discussions revolved around the need for more and better social services that address behavioral health. For example, government officials in Phillips County reported that they routinely connected those in need of addiction treatment to other counties because the only local resource was not considered to be effective. In Coahoma County, the government officials reported a lack of public mental health resources across not only the county, but the entire state, leaving them with few options. Similarly, the mental health services available to address children's mental health needs were deemed to be insufficient and ineffective, with several interviewees questioning whether they were worthwhile.

Community Recommendations

When community representatives and members were asked for recommendations to reduce crime, several themes emerged, including strengthening the government institutions responsible for dealing with crime and addressing the risk factors associated with crime—mainly poverty, poor education, and urban decay (see Table 3.6). In terms of government institutions, addressing overall corruption within local government was brought up more frequently in Phillips than in Coahoma County. There was near-universal agreement across the different types of interviews and focus groups that a history of local government corruption must be addressed to restore trust

in the criminal justice system, although they differed in how much corruption still currently exists. Some noted that it is getting better, while others reported that the corruption is so entrenched that it will not likely be solved until there is close to a full turnover in elected positions.

Table 3.6. Recommendations for Preventing/Reducing Crime

	Coahoma County			Phillips County		
	Focus Group (%)	Government (%)	Stakeholders (%)	Focus Group (%)	Government (%)	Stakeholders (%)
Address corruption	0	0	14	100	33	38
Improve criminal justice system						
• Law enforcement	0	0	14	100	67	38
• Courts	0	0	0	50	17	13
• Corrections	0	33	0	100	50	25
Crime-reduction intervention	0	66	0	0	100	
Economic development	0	33	29	50	33	75
Improving education system	0	0	43	0	0	50
More/different social programs	50	33	57	50	50	63
Reduce urban decay	50	0	0	0	33	13

Improving various aspects of the local criminal justice system was discussed at length, particularly in Phillips County. There was a great deal of agreement that the police department is ineffective and in need of serious reform. This sentiment was fully acknowledged by both police and local government leadership, who have been focusing on making improvements through increasing officer compensation, removing officers who are not performing to standards, increasing training, and generally making over the entire department. The community also recognized these efforts and reported optimism that things will change for the better.

Another area where there was a great deal of agreement was the dysfunction within the court system. Recommendations for improvement included improving case management in information technology systems to make it easier to access information, creating continuity in case processing by changing the way the court calendar and rotating judges are scheduled, and supporting a full-time prosecutor and staff.

Finally, there was a great deal of discussion surrounding building a new jail and how that would lead to increased offender accountability and reduction in crime. This discussion illustrated the community zeitgeist on criminal behavior: Community members held particularly strong beliefs that building a new jail would provide a credible deterrent to criminal activity, while government officials held mixed views of this prospect and were debating the costs and

benefits of such a proposal. Far fewer interviewees in Coahoma County made specific recommendations for improving the police departments, courts, or correctional system. However, government officials in both communities recommended adopting interventions to reduce crime, citing programs and strategies that have been found to be effective in other jurisdictions, such as multiagency, cross-sector partnerships focused on crime reduction, using civil laws and code enforcement to help address problems that lead to or facilitate crime, and coordinating with social services to help address risk factors for criminal involvement and victimization.

Other recommendations did not necessarily involve the criminal justice system itself but instead focused on addressing the perceived causes and correlates of crime. Many people in the community expressed the belief that crime was the direct result of poverty and believed that economic development, the availability of more and better jobs, and an improved educational system would reduce crime. Government officials in Phillips County reported they are trying to attract new industry to the area, but it is a challenging endeavor.

4. Research-Based Approaches to Addressing Community Crime and Violence

The preceding sections presented a general discussion of how other philanthropic foundations fund issues in criminal justice and a crime-and-violence needs assessment for Phillips and Coahoma Counties. This chapter explores the research on programs that address the needs identified in the preceding chapter. The approaches, strategies, and programs can be viewed as a catalog of vetted strategies that hold promise to improve community safety in the Mississippi Delta.

Both Coahoma County and Phillips County have recognized issues with burglary, gun violence, petty theft, robbery, gangs, and drugs (in roughly that order). Government officials were more concerned with burglary and violent crimes in general but did not tend to perceive that crime was excessively high or increasing. Community members also perceived burglary and gun violence to be issues and felt that the situation was getting worse, as they often perceived an increase in violence severity. Youthful offenders and gang members were considered the most problematic crime issues by both community members and government officials, although the extent to which either of these groups engage in organized activity is limited. In addition, communities reported a variety of social, behavioral, and economic challenges that are related to crime. In particular, inadequate family and community support, lack of economic opportunity, government system failure, limited social programs and services, failing schools, and outmigration and urban decay were reported as contributing to the crime problem.

Decades of research document what is known about preventing and reducing crime. With the findings of Chapter 3 in mind, the research literature on successful crime prevention and reduction was reviewed, along with what works to address the causes of crime and violence. Some approaches directly target crime and violence, while others attempt to prevent it by intervening on its precursors. In this section, we describe a variety of tactics that have been found to be effective at improving public safety. The information was drawn primarily from systematic reviews and meta-analyses that summarize thousands of individual research studies to provide information about the effectiveness of various approaches, along with information about their costs, difficulty of implementation, likelihood of succeeding, specific outcomes, timeline, and partners/systems involved where available. *This was not a systematic review of programs*—we searched for and describe approaches and programs to match the needs of the community, which required using discretion to identify and prioritize those that address particular problems, have been tested in similar settings or with similar populations, or have the most robust research evidence.

The approaches and programs described in this chapter can be used as menus to inform the selection of intervention strategies. The most-relevant approaches that match the problems

described by the communities were selected and are described in two main sections—those that deal directly with crime and violence and those that focus on the precursors of crime and violence. Within those two groupings, each approach was reduced to specific objectives, and up to five strategies were described per objective. The research team also offers implementation considerations to provide additional relevant information when considering selecting this type of approach for the Mississippi Delta.

Programs That Directly Target Crime and Violence

The first set of interventions that most directly target crime and violence in the short term usually involve the formal criminal justice system but several also include various community members and groups. They are organized by programs and approaches that target the specific crime types, crime locations, and perpetrators identified by the community as being the most problematic. For interventions that target specific crimes, the timeline for expected effects is relatively short—outcomes are generally measured within a year of full program implementation.⁴

Interventions That Target Specific Crimes

We identified four categories of interventions that directly target violent and drug crimes. These approaches should generate results within the first year after full implementation (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1. Interventions by Crime Type: Violent and Drug Crime

Approach	Description	Program Effects	Estimated Cost	Implementation Considerations
Violent, gang, and gun crime: focused deterrence strategies	Police identify active offenders in a discrete geographic location, crack-down on violent offenders, and leverage deterrence power against less-serious offenders by offering a second chance. Concurrently, the neighborhood is engaged to promote positive police-community relations, and social services are offered to offenders that stay in the community.	Average effect size across 24 studies = 0.38, or a medium effect size, in the target area. Programs that target gangs or guns appear to be more effective than those that target drug markets.	\$90,000–\$142,000 for law enforcement costs pre-call-in only for undercover investigations and support. The entire program likely costs much more.	This approach takes a tremendous amount of coordination between criminal justice system actors. Implementation challenges prevent many efforts from being successful. It was conducted in Guntersville, Alabama, with mixed success.

⁴ Each program has its own definition of “full implementation.”

Approach	Description	Program Effects	Estimated Cost	Implementation Considerations
Homicide: homicide review	This program attempts to reduce homicides and non-fatal shootings through a multidisciplinary and multiagency homicide review process.	Associated with 50% decrease in homicide	No publicly available information	This approach involves coordination across government and nongovernment actors. There are no reports of its implementation in a setting similar to Mississippi Delta.
Gun crime: public health approaches	These strategies generally take a public health approach, using trained street-violence interrupters and outreach workers, public education campaigns, and community mobilization to reduce shootings and killings.	Mixed. In Chicago, reductions in shootings (13–24%) and gang violence (28–58%). However, it did not work in other places.	No publicly available information	This approach has been subject to a lot of criticism by researchers. It is extremely challenging to implement, although it has been widely adopted and implemented internationally.
Violent and property crime and disorder: problem-oriented policing (POP)	This is a policing method aimed to develop strategies that prevent and reduce crime by systematically analyzing the problems of a community, searching for effective solutions to the problems, and evaluating the impact of their efforts.	A meta-analysis of 30 tests found an average effect size of 0.21, which is moderate, in reducing different types of crime and delinquency.	No publicly available information	To be considered a true POP program, it needs to include community involvement, data analysis, and evaluation.

Violent, Gun, and Gang Crime: Focused Deterrence

Focused deterrence strategies include a variety of projects that have been used to reduce serious violent gang crime, gun crime, repeat offending, and the crime and disorder associated with overt drug markets. The strategy is rated as a promising practice by the Department of Justice’s crimesolutions.gov website (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (2013).

This approach, which has come to be known as “pulling levers,” holds that directly communicating a deterrence message to specific individuals who are at the greatest risk of involvement in crime but are still low-level offenders can increase perceptions of the certainty and severity of punishment related to those crimes. One of the first applications of this approach occurred in Operation Ceasefire, an effort to reduce youth gang violence in Boston from 1995 (Braga et al., 2001). A review of focused deterrence programs and their effectiveness can be found in two systematic reviews (Braga and Weisburd, 2012; Braga, Weisburd, and Turchan, 2018). There are three types of programs that each leverage the deterrent power of the criminal

justice system, targeting (1) gangs or criminally active groups, (2) overt drug markets, or (3) repeat offenders. The key program features are

- selecting a crime problem
- creating an interagency team, including local law enforcement, prosecution, probation/parole, and federal law enforcement and prosecutors
- conducting investigations and creating case files on all active and/or key offenders
- communicating directly with targeted offenders in a “forum” or “call-in” to inform them they are under heightened scrutiny; this is often held in a public setting with community member attendance
- offering social services and other community resources to offenders
- arresting and prosecuting the violent offenders as an example of enforcement powers, efforts to increase police legitimacy in the community, and subsequent community involvement (these are variant features).

Only one study examined the cost of the intervention; researchers found that it ranged from \$90,000 to \$142,000 in law enforcement costs associated with conducting investigations and preparing the case files, but not the costs of any of the other partners (Kilmer and Burgdorf, 2015). A recent systematic review of 24 studies concluded that the approach effective at reducing crime (with an average effect size of 0.38, or a “medium”-sized impact), with those that focus on gangs or groups of criminally active offenders being the most effective at reducing violence (Braga et al., 2018). There is not a review of how long these approaches take or how long the impacts last, although some projects that have looked at long-term changes found them to reduce crime and violence for up to ten years after the call-in (Saunders et al., 2015). This approach takes a tremendous amount of coordination between criminal justice system actors, and while it is included in several lists of effective programs, implementation challenges prevent many efforts from being successful (Saunders, Robbins, and Ober, 2017). While there is no complete list of where these approaches have been tried, the Drug Market Intervention was successfully implemented in Gunterville, Alabama, a Southern, rural town of around 8,500 residents. While it did not result in a reduction of crime in this setting, it was associated with improvements in police-community relations (Saunders et al., 2016b; Saunders et al., 2017). (For more information about how it has been implemented across a variety of sites, see Saunders et al., 2016c).

Homicide: Homicide Review Committees

Homicide review committees are multidisciplinary multiagency groups that review homicide cases and identify methods of prevention and intervention. The approach has been rated as effective at reducing homicide by the Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2014). This approach involves regular meetings that conduct strategic problem analysis by reviewing both specific cases and greater trends by law enforcement, other criminal justice professionals, and community service providers. This approach uses both a public health and criminal justice system perspective to

make recommendations that range from microlevel strategies and tactics to macrolevel policy change. It is a multitiered intervention with four components (O'Brien, Woods, and Cisler, 2007):

- **Real-time review:** The police department immediately responds and investigates, increasing presence and identifying/apprehending suspects. Social service agencies are also notified within 48 hours to provide crisis intervention, case management, counseling, and any other necessary services to the victims' families.
- **Criminal justice review:** Monthly meetings by a variety of groups including, but not limited to, local police (community-police liaisons, district officers, members of various specialized units such as vice, violent crimes, or gang units), prosecutors (the district attorney's office, the city attorney's office, the U.S. Attorney's office), community stakeholders (local school district officials, local housing authority, medical examiners), department of corrections, and federal law enforcement agencies (Drug Enforcement Administration; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; FBI). The committee staff prepare incidents for group review using PowerPoint presentations and meeting participants then weigh in on each case and provide information they have received on each incident.
- **Community service provider review:** These meetings examine closed cases and incidents to determine what community-level factors contributed to the crime. This information is then used in the criminal justice review to raise awareness and assist in handling current cases and establishing preventive community resources.
- **Community review:** This meeting is designed to educate the community about the nature of homicides and shootings to attract interest from other community members. Aggregate data from the aforementioned components are presented, and community members were briefed on existing prevention interventions.

The Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission was associated with a statistically significant 52-percent decrease in the monthly count of homicides in the intervention districts (Azrael, Braga, and O'Brien, 2013). There is no information about the costs associated with this approach. For more information, see a description on Milwaukee's government website (City of Milwaukee, undated).

Gun Violence: Public Health Approaches

The public health approach to gun violence reduction seeks to change individual and community attitudes and norms about gun violence. Cure Violence is the most well-known program of its type and is now being implemented across multiple countries and continents (Butts et al., 2015; Slutkin et al., 2015). This approach considers gun violence to be analogous to a communicable disease that passes from person to person when left untreated; it works independently of law enforcement. The approach works to change operative norms regarding violence through community mobilization, education campaigns, and street outreach workers who mentor criminally active community members to break the cycle of violence by influencing violence-supportive beliefs. Cure Violence is considered to be a promising approach by the

Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice. It should be noted that this program has been implemented in a much wider variety of contexts, with uneven results (Papachristos, 2011).

This model is not enforcement-focused; rather, it attempts to change community norms and offer incentives for law-abiding behavior. There are multiple program components:

- Outreach workers work with small groups of high-risk or criminally involved clients to connect them to services, including education, employment, housing, and mental and behavioral health.
- Clergy and residents work together to change community norms surrounding violence.
- Public education campaigns highlight the high cost of violence.
- Education and employment are provided for gang-involved community members.
- Violence interrupters work to mediate gang conflicts to stem retaliatory violence following shootings.

This approach has been successful at reducing violence in some areas and not others. In a review of different projects in Chicago, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Phoenix, and Pittsburgh, findings are mixed—for example, it reduced shootings by 13 to 25 percent and gang violence by 28 to 58 percent in Chicago, but did not result in crime reductions in other jurisdictions. Researchers cannot determine if this is because the program model does not always work or if significant implementation challenges are responsible for different effectiveness across sites (Butts et al., 2015). There is no publicly available data on program costs. This approach is being used both within the United States and abroad; there is no comprehensive list of locations, so it is not possible to say whether it has been used in a setting similar to the Mississippi Delta. For a description of multiple implementations, see the Cure Violence website (Cure Violence, undated).

Violent and Property Crime and Disorder: Problem-Oriented Policing

POP is a structured process for identifying crime problems, developing solutions, implementing those solutions, and evaluating their impact. The Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice rates problem-oriented policing as a promising practice based on one meta-analysis. POP is one of the most widely used strategies among progressive law enforcement agencies (Weisburd et al., 2010).

POP approaches can take on a variety of targets—some focus on crime hot spots, but they might also target nongeographic concentrations in crime and other problems, including repeat offenders, repeat victims, and repeat times. The model involves selecting a narrowly defined problem type and trying one or more targeted responses intended to reduce the incidence or severity of that problem type. Programs can also include partners outside of the police agency. Analysis of crime data plays a central role in selecting a problem type, analyzing it, evaluating the responses, and adjusting as needed. These interventions are varied by design, as they are dependent on the specific problem that has been identified, but they generally include a four-step process called the “SARA” (scanning, analysis, response, and assessment) model:

- **Scanning:** In the first step, police identify and prioritize crime and disorder programs in a jurisdiction. This is done using a variety of data collection methods, including looking at a variety of different crime data sources and having discussions with the community to prioritize problems that residents identify as having the largest negative impact on their quality of life.
- **Analysis:** The second step involves analyzing the data to gain an understanding about why the problem is occurring. This is essential for addressing it appropriately.
- **Response:** Police and community partners (as needed) select an intervention based on the analysis. A response plan contains the nature of each responses and its specific objectives and the responsibilities of each partners. It should include a plan for monitoring implementation.
- **Assessment:** The final step is the continual evaluation of the effectiveness of the response and if/how the intended objectives are achieved (Weisburd et al., 2010).

Overall, looking at the outcomes from multiple studies, Weisburd et al. (2010) found a significant effect of problem-oriented policing strategies on crime and disorder. Across 30 tests, it was found to be associated with a moderate decrease in crime (effect size = 0.21). There is no comprehensive list of where it has been used, so there is no way to determine whether it has been implemented in such a setting as the Mississippi Delta, although it is likely, as it is considered to be the most widely accepted and widely used strategies in American policing (Braga et al., 2001). There is no information about the average cost of implementation, as it will be dependent on the project. A problem-oriented policing implementation guide (Scott and Kirby, 2012) is available, and the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing also provides information about SARA (University at Albany, State University of New York, undated).

Interventions by Crime Location

Four approaches to crime reduction by crime location were identified (see Table 4.2). Interventions that target specific and well-defined geographic locations can expect to see results more quickly than some other approaches, yielding results within the first year of full implementation.

Table 4.2. Interventions by Crime Locations Summary Table

Approach	Description	Program Effects	Estimated Cost	Implementation Considerations
Neighborhood watch	Also known as block watch, apartment watch, home watch, and community watch, these programs involve citizens trying to prevent crime in their neighborhood or community. Citizens remain alert for suspicious activities and report those activities to the police.	A study of ten sites found crime was 16% lower in areas with programs after implementation.	No publicly available information	Not all programs work—there was a range of effectiveness across the studies. There are no data on what makes some programs better than others.

Approach	Description	Program Effects	Estimated Cost	Implementation Considerations
Hot spots policing	Police focus their resources and manpower in discrete areas with higher volumes of crimes to disrupt criminal activity.	Study of ten studies found that it produces a moderate reduction in crime (0.12), half the impact of problem-oriented policing.	Found to be cost effective, with a savings of \$421,768 for each additional officer assigned to hot spots full time	Hot-spots policing efforts that rely on problem-oriented policing strategies generate larger crime-reduction effects than those that apply traditional policing strategies.
Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved street lighting • Increased surveillance (closed-circuit television [CCTV]) • Alley gating 	CCTV was associated with a 16% reduction in crime across 41 studies, with vehicle crime being reduced by 26%. No impact on violent crime. The installation of traffic barriers into high-crime neighborhoods was associated with an 8–37% reduction in predatory crime.	No publicly available information	There are a variety of strategies to choose, and they tend to be very popular with residents.
Disorder policing	Law enforcement focus on cleaning up signs of disorder such as graffiti and abandoned buildings using both the criminal and municipal code to signal that criminal offending will not be tolerated.	The approach is associated with a modest reduction in crime (0.21) across 30 studies.	No publicly available information	These programs, if implemented incorrectly, can have very negative consequences and strain police-community relations (e.g., New York Police Department's stop and frisk policy).

Neighborhood Watch

Neighborhood watch programs involve community residents in preventing crime in their neighborhood or community by training them to be alert for suspicious activities and report those activities to the police. They usually target residential burglary, but can also involve a variety of offenses such as street robberies, car theft, and vandalism. They have been implemented in a variety of community settings and can be initiated by the police or the community.

Neighborhood watches are rated as “promising” by the Department of Justice.

Neighborhood watch programs can have a variety of components, and the size of the areas covered can vary widely from one or a small number of dwellings to large areas with thousands of residents. The most common elements are

- Residents are advised to watch for suspicious activities and report them to the police.
- Residents are encouraged to prominently mark their personal property to indicate ownership and make it more difficult for criminals to offload stolen property.
- Residents are encouraged to evaluate their property for security weaknesses and address any issues they uncover.

- Other components can include citizen patrols, educational programs for young people, victim support services, and increased police presence through foot patrols or auxiliary units. Many programs name a block or street captain, who in turn reports to the block coordinator. The block coordinator serves as liaison between the program and local police department.

Neighborhood watch has been found to be effective at reducing crime by about 16 percent, according to a meta-analysis of ten separate studies (Bennett, Holloway, and Farrington, 2006, 2009). The cost of such programs varies substantially, as do their activities, but they generally include law enforcement time to work the communities, access to facilities for meetings, the costs associating with producing a newsletter, and the time of community residents. For more information, see the National Neighborhood Watch website (National Sheriff’s Association, undated).

Hot Spots

A large number of studies have found that crime is not spread evenly across geography but is clustered in a number of places, or hot spots, across a city (Braga, Papachristos, and Hureau, 2014). Hot-spots policing takes advantage of this phenomenon by placing police resources and assets in these locations to suppress criminal activity. This approach has been rated effective by the Department of Justice, and the Washington State Institute of Public Policy found it to be a cost-effective strategy for reducing crime.

Hot-spots policing involves two main components—crime mapping to determine where there are high concentrations of crime and deploying police resources to those targets. This approach is very popular—70 percent of departments with over 100 sworn officers reported using crime mapping to identify hot spots (Weisburd et al., 2003). Police departments also use a variety of responses to those hot spots. Hot spots policing components may vary as follows:

- Crime-mapping techniques use software packages, such as ArcGIS or free software. The unit of analysis may vary in size, from buildings or addresses all the way up to larger areas such as clusters of addresses or street segments. Hot spots can be displayed using point-mapping techniques and spatial ellipses, and a combination of technology and police officer or crime analysts may identify clusters (Eck et al., 2005).
- Police responses can be generally categorized into two categories: (1) problem-oriented policing, which attempts to change the underlying conditions leading to the crime, and (2) traditional strategies, such as directed vehicle or foot patrols or crackdowns, proactive arrests, order maintenance and drug enforcement crackdowns, increased gun searches and seizures, and zero-tolerance policing. The first approach has fewer negative secondary effects, such as alienating the community.

The National Research Council’s Committee to Review Research on Police Policy and Practices concluded that hot-spots policing has the strongest evidence base of any other effective program (National Research Council, 2004). A recent review of ten studies on hot-spots policing found it has a modest effect on reducing crime (effect size = 0.12), with problem-oriented

strategies being twice as effective as those using traditional strategies (Braga et al., 2014; National Research Council, 2004). Braga et al. also found that there is little evidence that crime gets displaced to another location. Depending on how large and numerous hot spots are and how many police resources are directed to these spots, the costs can vary. There is no comprehensive list of settings where this approach has been used, but it is very common in policing, so it has likely been used in a setting such as the Mississippi Delta. A study by the Washington State Institute of Public Policy (2017d) found that it is a cost-effective strategy, with a savings of \$421,768 to taxpayers and community members for each additional officer assigned to hot-spots policing strategies. Crime reductions from hot-spots policing accrue immediately.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

CPTED refers to a variety of specific tactics to limit the opportunities to commit crime through altering the physical environment. These tactics can include, but are not limited to, controlling access to vulnerable locations by physically blocking or locking down them or increasing the perceived likelihood of apprehension by increasing visibility through lighting and cameras. Several of these practices have been rated as effective by the National Institute of Justice, while there is insufficient research to conclude whether others are effective. Once implemented, they should reduce crime quickly.

A few examples of popular environmental design features that have been tested are

- **Alley-gating**, which restricts access to an alley to only residents to reduce opportunities for offending. Depending on local ordinances and community sentiment, the planning process for installing gates or other hardware can take over a year, as permission needs to be secured by residents, and some alleys may be public rights of way.
- **CCTV surveillance** can be used in place of, or in addition to, police. Public surveillance cameras monitor, record, and transmit images of a specific area of interest and are either monitored remotely by security personnel or preprogrammed to scan the specified area. Cameras should be placed in highly populated towns, city centers, car parks, or various other high-crime areas.
- **Improved lighting**, which reduces opportunities for offenders to commit crimes in a variety of public or private settings, such as residential neighborhoods, parking lots, shopping malls, campuses, hospitals, or various other facilities. Installation and street light components vary by setting. Increasing street lighting may include adding new lights, trimming bushes and trees to make lights more visible, and replacing old or broken lamps with new light fixtures.

Burglaries went down by 37 percent by alley-gating areas of Liverpool, England (Bowers, Johnson, and Hirschfield, 2004). In a review of CCTV's impact on crime, Welsh and Farrington (2009) found a 16-percent reduction in overall crime across 41 studies, with a 35-percent reduction in property offenses but no impact on violent crime in the studies that were disaggregated by crime type. However, it should be noted that this review includes a large number of studies from the United Kingdom, so it is unclear whether the effects would be the same in the United States. Improving street lighting reduced crime by an average of 27 percent

across 13 studies, and, in the studies that disaggregated by crime type, it was found to be more effective on property crimes (20-percent reduction) than on violent offenses (no impact; Welsh and Farrington, 2008). There are no estimates for the costs of the different approaches, but they likely have a large range of costs, depending on specific features. For more information, see the International CPTED Association webpage (International CPTED Association, undated) and the CPTED Guide by the Center for Problem Oriented Policing (Zahm, 2007).

Disorder Policing (Formerly Called “Broken Windows”)

Disorder policing is a crime-control strategy that focuses on signs of physical and social disorder in neighborhoods. Concentrating on disorderly conditions, such as graffiti or loitering, sends a signal to prospective offenders that illicit behavior will not be tolerated. It is rated as an effective practice by the Department of Justice.

Disorder policing is a strategy that does not use any particular tactic, but it represents a diversity of approaches and levels of focus (Weisburd and Eck, 2004). It can involve a wide variety of tactics, including arrests for misdemeanors (e.g., disorderly conduct, loitering) and citations or other code-enforcement measures for signs of physical disorder, such as dilapidated buildings, abandoned cars, and graffiti, which are also an integral piece of CPTED (Worrall, 2002). Community-oriented approaches can involve neighborhood beautification activities, such as trash removal or graffiti abatement. Just as the tactics vary, so do the geographic areas, which include “microplaces” (e.g., crime hot spots, problem buildings), smaller police-defined areas (e.g., beats), neighborhoods and selected stretches of roads or highways, and larger police-defined areas (e.g., precincts). Strategies may include engaging residents, local business owners, and other public or private agencies to help identify local problems and develop and implement appropriate responses. Some strategies may focus on specific local problems and target specific populations. However, the disorder-policing approach focuses less on target populations and more on the areas or locations within which disorder policing is implemented. Although there is no single specific strategy for implementing disorder policing, there are two broad categories of approaches:

- More-aggressive enforcement-based tactics, such as order-maintenance policing or zero-tolerance policing, in which police attempt to impose order through strict enforcement of lower-level criminal offenses and civil ordinance violations. These approaches have been linked to such negative secondary-order effects as increased friction between the police and the community (Tyler and Fagan, 2012).
- Less-aggressive community or problem-oriented policing measures, in which police attempt to reduce disorder and crime through partnerships with the community and addressing specific recurring neighborhood problems (Skogan, 2006).

Across 30 tests, disorder policing was associated with a modest reduction in crime and delinquency (effect size =0. 21), and the researchers found significant declines across violent, property, and drug crimes (Braga, Welsh, and Schnell, 2015). There is no information about the

costs of such programs. More information can be found at the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy’s (2018) page on broken windows policing.

Interventions by Offender Types to Decrease Recidivism

Interventions that target specific types of offenders can reduce their criminal recidivism (see Table 4.3). It takes longer to see outcomes for these programs, but they are usually measured and experienced the first year after treatment completion.

Table 4.3. Intervention by Offender Types to Decrease Recidivism

Program	Description	Program Effects	Estimated Cost	Implementation Considerations
Juveniles: treatment in secure corrections for serious juvenile offenders	A variety of treatment programming for juveniles while they are incarcerated, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> behavioral treatment cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) cognitive treatment educational treatment nonbehavioral treatment 	Reduction in overall recidivism by 31% and serious recidivism by 35%	No publicly available cost information	Treatments take place while a juvenile is incarcerated
Juveniles: family-focused (FFT) therapy and multisystemic therapy (MST)	Family-based interventions that use a multistep approach to enhance protective factors and reduce risk factors in the family. These approaches have been found to be effective in a variety of settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in state institutions in probation setting functional family parole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MST participants had 54% fewer arrests and 57% fewer days incarcerated in long term study (ten-to-15-year follow-up) FFT reduces recidivism by 20% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FFT costs \$3,134 per participant and yields \$36,737 in savings MST costs \$7,830 per participant and yields \$12,655 in benefits 	Programs are widely used across the United States; established training materials and technical assistance providers
Adults: correctional education	Providing continuing education to incarcerated adults to reduce the likelihood that they will recidivate	Correctional education reduces recidivism by 13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic education: \$1,249 yields \$12,076 Post-secondary education: \$1,248 yields 424,711 Vocational education: \$1,495 yields \$17,781 	Programs have been significantly cut in recent years
Adults: CBT	CBT includes various components, such as cognitive restructuring, behavioral activation, emotion regulation, communication skills, and problem-solving	An average reduction in recidivism of 25% across 58 studies	Costs \$1,395 per participant and yields \$8,817 in savings	No evidence that any specific CBT approach is better than another, but it is more effective for more-serious offenders. It should include

Program	Description	Program Effects	Estimated Cost	Implementation Considerations
				distinct anger control and interpersonal problems solving.

Juveniles: Treatment in Secure Corrections for Serious Juvenile Offenders

Treatment for serious juvenile offenders encompasses a variety of psychological and behavioral interventions conducted while the offender is serving a sentence in confinement to decrease the likelihood that the juvenile will recidivate once he or she returns to the community. This suite of programs has been rated as effective by the Department of Justice.

These treatment programs can include psychological approaches, social and educational methods, and altering environmental conditions to be more conducive to positive change, all of which support the learning of prosocial attitudes and behaviors. There are five broad types of program that reduce recidivism by improving offenders' psychological, emotional, educational, and social health.

- **Behavioral treatment** teaches individuals to replace their criminal tendencies with socially admissible behavior. All correctional staff should be involved in the delivery of behavioral treatment programs, but the programs are typically led by a small group of experts. Behavioral treatment programs may include token economy programs and behavior modification strategies.
- **CBT** teaches skills and prosocial values. The main elements include (1) an examination of deficits in cognitive and interaction skills, (2) small group treatment for several weekly sessions, and (3) cognitive problem solving, social skills training, anger control, critical reasoning, values development, negotiation abilities, and creative thinking. This approach is the most commonly used treatment programs with all kinds of offenders.
- **Cognitive treatment** differs slightly from the cognitive-behavioral model in that it stresses cognitive reframing through the control of cognitive distortions, automatic thought, and self-instructions. Cognitive treatment centers more on the cognitive part of cognitive-behavioral treatment.
- **Education treatment**, including academics, provides knowledge and skills and can vary in level and mode of delivery.
- **Nonbehavioral treatment** focuses on the individuals' underlying psychological issues through therapies, such as psychological therapy, to address social and emotional issues.

A meta-analysis of treatment programs for incarcerated juveniles found that they were effective at reducing overall recidivism by 31 percent and serious recidivism by 35 percent (Garrido and Morales, 2007). There is no information on the cost of these programs.

Juveniles: Family Functional Therapy and Multisystemic Therapy

FFT and MST are evidence-based, standardized, effective approaches to providing therapy to at-risk and criminally involved juveniles.

FFT is a flexible, culturally sensitive family-based clinical practice to address the complex and multidimensional problems experienced by high-risk and justice-involved youth. It takes a risk and protective factor approach, focusing on the family. It consists of eight to 12 one-hour sessions for mild cases and incorporates up to 30 sessions of direct service for families in more difficult situations, all over a three-month period. The model has five specific phases: (1) engagement to establish a therapeutic bond, (2) motivation to build the family relationships and positive experience of therapy, (3) relational assessment to analyze relationships within the family and shifting individual problems to a relational perspective, (4) behavior change to reduce and eliminate problem behavior and its accompanying family relationship patterns through individualized behavior change interventions (skill training, parenting, problem-solving, conflict management), and (5) generalization to increase capacity to use multisystemic community resources and prevent relapse.

FFT was found to reduce recidivism by 20 percent (Gordon et al., 1988). A large-scale trial of FFT found that when adherence to the FFT model was high, there was a significant reduction in felony crimes (34.9 percent), a significant reduction in violent crimes (30 percent), and a nonsignificant decrease in misdemeanor crimes (Sexton and Turner, 2010). The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2017e) conducted a cost-benefit study on their own FFT program and found that it cost \$3,134 per year per participant, which saved \$36,737 to crime victims and taxpayers over the course of their lives.

MST is an intensive family- and community-based therapy for youth with antisocial behaviors that also addresses risk and protective factors for offending. MST therapists meet with family members and others who play a role in the client's life (e.g., school, community) to improve the real-world functioning of youth by changing their natural settings—home, school, and neighborhood—in ways that promote prosocial behavior while decreasing antisocial behavior. Treatment varies by family according to clinical need, with families meeting with therapists daily and gradually tapering time to as infrequently as once a week over the three- to five-month course of treatment. A therapist (with a master's degree or above), with a caseload of four to six families, provides most mental health services and coordinates access to other important services (e.g., medical, educational, recreational). It has been rated a model program by the Department of Justice and a model-plus (the highest rating) program by Blueprints for Violence Prevention (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2011b).

Twenty-five evaluations of MST have been published and provide evidence that MST can produce short- and long-term reductions in criminal behavior and out-of-home placements for serious juvenile offenders (van der Stouwe et al., 2014). In a long-term follow-up, it led to 54 percent fewer arrests and 57 percent fewer days incarcerated for 22 years following the program (Wagner et al., 2014). It has also been found to be cost effective, with a cost of about \$7,830 per participant but a yield of \$12,655 in benefits, according to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2017g). More information can be found on the training and technical assistance provider's webpage (MST Services, undated).

Adults: Correctional Education

There are a variety of different educational programs offered in some correctional settings that are associated with reduced recidivism rates when participants return to the community, including adult basic education classes providing instruction in arithmetic, reading, and writing; adult secondary education classes; and GED exam courses. Correctional education programs offerings vary dramatically from prison to prison, as do the methods by which classes are provided. Some prisons use on-site instruction, some use peer instruction to other prisoners, and other take advantage of distance-learning programs that coordinate with an outside educational institution. Some state prison systems have partnered with local community colleges to provide on-site class instruction, while other states administer classes through their own correctional school districts. It is rated as a promising approach to reduce recidivism by the Department of Justice (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, undated-c).

A recent meta-analysis of dozens of studies found that participants in correctional education had lower recidivism rates by an average of 13 percent (Davis et al., 2014). The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2017c) estimates that adult basic education costs \$1,248 and yields \$24,711 per participant; post-secondary education costs \$1,248 and yields \$24,711 in benefits per participant; and vocational education costs \$1,495 and yields \$17,781 in savings per participant.

Adults: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

CBT emphasizes individual accountability to show the client how cognitive deficits, distortions, and flawed thinking processes can lead to criminal behavior. All CBT programs focus on cognitive restructuring. CBT can be delivered in various criminal justice settings, including in secure facilities (e.g., prison) and community-based settings. It also addresses a number of problems associated with criminal behavior such as social skills, means-end problem solving, moral reasoning, self-control, impulse management, and self-efficacy. Techniques to address these problems include cognitive skills training, role playing, anger management, and other strategies that focus on improving social skills, moral development, or relapse prevention. CBT has been rated a promising practice to reduce recidivism by National Institute of Justice (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, undated-a).

In a meta-analysis of 32 studies of CBT with moderate- and high-risk adult offenders, it was found to be effective at reducing recidivism (Aos and Drake, 2013). Another meta-analysis across 58 studies found it reduced recidivism by 25 percent and found it to be more effective with a higher-risk population and when it included anger management and interpersonal conflict resolution (Landenberger and Lipsey, 2005). According to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2017b), it is also cost efficient—costing about \$1,395 and yielding \$8,817 in savings per participant.

Approaches to Address Root Causes of Crime and Violence

The second set of interventions that indirectly affect crime and violence focus on key underlying causes of crime. This is not an exhaustive list of interventions, and programs are not exclusive to one intervention group. Interventions are organized by the root causes of crime identified in the needs assessment—family and community support interventions, financial stability interventions, community capacity-building interventions, and education interventions. There are many evidence-based programs that seek to address these issues and details of one exemplar for each intervention type are described in the next sections, which were selected based on program cost, target outcomes and population. Other effective or promising options are also noted. It takes much longer to see beneficial effects on crime and violence rates through addressing underlying causes, as these approaches aim to affect risk factors, not directly affect crime and violence themselves.

Family and Community Support Interventions

This category of interventions includes programs intended to improve parenting through curriculum-based individual or group sessions and home visiting; social cohesion through community-focused activities; and youth social development through engaging in community-based enrichment exercises and mentorship (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4. Family and Community Support Interventions

Approach/ Program	Description	Program Effects	Estimated Cost	Implementation Considerations
Curriculum-based parenting programs	Intended to provide support and training to parents to strengthen their knowledge, skills, and understanding with the goal of improving child and parent outcomes. Program curricula draw from a variety of theoretical approaches that are delivered by trained personnel or volunteers in weekly sessions that range in quantity and duration.	Research from almost 170 studies has found consistent positive results of target outcomes with large to moderate effect sizes (1.30 to 0.20) for diverse families	Estimated cost of \$835 per participant and yield of \$5,381 in savings	The program has been adapted for use with multiple racial/ethnic groups. There are established training materials and models for program implementation and adaptation.
Home-visiting programs	Trained personnel visit parents and children in their homes to provide information, support, and/or training on child development, health, and parenting, as well as referrals for services. Home visits are conducted by nurses, social workers, paraprofessionals, or community lay workers.	A study of 20 home-visiting programs demonstrated numerous favorable impacts on primary and secondary measures (e.g., child development, school readiness, positive parenting practices)	Estimated cost of \$11,813 per participant for the Nurse Family Partnership program and yield of \$9,545 in savings	Home-visiting programs are implemented in rural and urban settings across the country. Federal funding to support programs is provided by the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood

Approach/ Program	Description	Program Effects	Estimated Cost	Implementation Considerations
Community cohesion and social connectedness	Community residents, businesses, local organizations, and government and school officials engage in collective action to increase social interaction, develop community capacity, and connect diverse groups of people.	There are no quantitative evaluations of Communities for All Ages (CFAA). However, a qualitative study demonstrated improvements in community engagement and social capital	CFAA grantees received initial grants of \$7,000–\$10,000 for assessment and planning, then \$20,000–\$50,000 per year for up to six years for implementation	Home Visiting Program. Implementation challenges include reaching agreement on cross-age priorities and length of time to educate the community about the program.
Community programs for positive youth development	Programs are typically led by adults and seek to achieve target goals and youth outcomes by completing activities that range from highly structured, detailed curriculum to less-structured guidelines.	Two studies found that participants had lower levels of teenage pregnancy, course failure, and school suspension than students in the control group	Estimates that it costs \$410 to \$640 per student annually	Wyman uses a train-the-trainer model and requires each program to become a Certified Replication Partner (\$26,000), so the program can train locally.
Mentoring	Adults or peers volunteer or receive a small stipend to be matched with at-risk youth. Mentors receive training and supervision by the oversight organization. Mentors-mentees meet at least weekly at various locations to build relationships and improve outcomes, including crime rates, academic achievement, and substance use.	A meta-analysis of 10 studies on mentoring noted an effect size of –0.7 for reduction in crime; 0.41 for age of initiation of alcohol; 0.25 for age of initiation of other illicit drugs; 0.28 for high school graduation	Estimated costs of \$4,787 per participant and yield of \$8,333 in savings.	Mentoring programs should consider length of the relationship, the needs of the mentee, the frequency of the interaction, the quality of the relationship between mentor and mentee, and the organization and structure of the program.

Curriculum-Based Parenting Programs

Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is a parent and family skills development program that was developed and evaluated in 1982–1986 (Molgaard, Spoth, and Redmond, 2000). The program is currently implemented in every U.S. city and in 35 countries. SFP aims to improve parenting skills and family relationships, as well as reduce risk factors in the areas of behavior, emotion, academics, and social problems in children. SFP has been implemented with different age groups from three to 17 in a variety of settings (e.g., school, home, community agencies), with various structures (e.g., individual or group; case manager-led or independent), and differing levels of urbanicity (i.e., rural, urban, suburban). The number of sessions also vary,

ranging from seven to 14 weeks. SFP has been implemented with high-risk and general families and has been culturally adapted for use with different racial and ethnic groups (e.g., African American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American families). For additional information about SFP, see their website (Strengthening Families Program, undated).

One iteration of SFP that has been reviewed and rated effective by Crime Solutions is SFP 10–14 (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2011d). The overall structure is similar to that of other versions of SFP. SFP 10–14 is seven-sessions, delivered in a group, and facilitated by paraprofessionals. The program consists of separate weekly, one-hour parent training and child skills development activities, followed by a one-hour family session with parents and children. During the family sessions, parents and children practice the skills they have learned in their individual groups, work on conflict resolution and communication, and engage in activities to increase family cohesiveness and positive involvement of the child in the family. Parents are taught how to clarify expectations, use appropriate disciplinary practices, manage strong emotions related to their children, and communicate effectively. Children are taught skills to refuse peer pressure and practice other personal and social interactional skills. Sessions are facilitated by three-person teams and include an average of eight families per session.

The likelihood that SFP 10–14 will yield benefits greater than the costs is 76 percent, with an annual estimated per participant cost of \$835 (in 2016 dollars; Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2017j). Meta-analysis of seven studies indicates positive outcomes in the following areas: alcohol use before end of middle school, alcohol or cannabis use in high school, disruptive behavior disorder symptoms, illicit drug use in high school, internalizing symptoms, and smoking in high school (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2017c).

Additional promising or effective curriculum-based programs to consider include

- Positive Family Support (also known as Family Check-Up), a three-tiered program that is implemented in middle schools for families with children at-risk of problem behaviors or substance use (Dishion et al., 2008)
- Families and School Together, a two-year, group-based intervention for families of children ages 0–12 that aims to build relationships among families, schools, and communities (especially in low-income localities), improve family functioning, and reduce school failure and delinquency (McDonald et al., 1997).

Home-Visiting Programs

Home-visiting programs typically target at-risk expectant parents and families with young children to provide training and support in parenting skills, child health, and development. Home visitors include a range of service providers, peer parents, and community workers. There is strong evidence that home-visiting programs improve parent and child outcomes (e.g., improve cognitive and social emotional skills; improve parenting and economic security; reduce rapid repeat pregnancies) (Lopez et al., 2015; Michalopoulos et al., 2017; Peacock et al., 2013; Sama-Miller et al., 2016). Twenty home-visiting models meet the Department of Health and Human

Services's (DHHS) criteria for evidence-based models including the Nurse Family Partnership program which is described below (Sama-Miller et al., 2016).

Nurse Family Partnership is a program for first-time, low-income mothers that includes one-on-one home visits from pregnancy through the child's second birthday. Visits are conducted by a trained public health registered nurse, and 60-to-90 minute visits occur about every other week. Nurses use instruction and observation and focus on improving pregnancy outcomes, infant health and development, and the mother's own personal life course. They coach the mothers and their families on planning for their future, staying in school, finding employment, and planning future pregnancies. Multiple clearinghouses used for this review rate this program as model, effective, or evidence based (Blueprints for Health Youth Development, undated-d; Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2017h).

The likelihood this program will yield benefits greater than the costs is 48 percent, with the annual estimated per participant cost of \$11,818 (in 2016 dollars; Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2017h). Evaluation results indicated positive outcomes in the following areas: child maltreatment, delinquency and criminal behavior, early cognitive development, internalizing behaviors, mental health, physical health and well-being, preschool communication/language development, and reciprocal parent-child warmth (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, undated-d).

Additional DHHS-rated evidence-based programs to consider include

- Family Check-Up for Children, a promising home-visiting program for families with children ages two to 11 who are at risk for behavior misconduct. The program consists of three one-hour sessions and the option for follow-up parenting sessions, which typically range from three to six visits (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2015b).
- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, a home-visiting program that targets parents with limited education or resources who have young children. The program seeks to improve school readiness through weekly, hour-long home visits for 30 weeks per year, and two-hour group meetings at least six times per year (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2017f).

Community Cohesion and Social Connectedness

Intergenerational communities (University of Wisconsin, Population Health Institute, 2017a) is one strategy used to increase community cohesion and social connectedness through encouraging individuals of different ages (especially children and older adults) to interact and collaborate to address the needs of all residents. Overall, this place-based approach seeks to create communities where (1) safety, health, education, and other basic needs are adequately provided for residents of all ages; (2) programs, policies, and practices that increase cooperation; interaction, and reciprocity between people of different generations are established; and (3) people of all ages are enabled to share their talents, resources, and support with one another through relationships that benefit the individuals and their communities (MetLife Foundation,

Generations United, 2015). Partnerships are critical to intergenerational communities and may include representatives from local government, older adult living communities, school, business, community organizations, service agencies, families, and other community members.

CFAA is a national model developed by the Intergenerational Center at Temple University that aims to improve outcomes for community residents of all ages, especially vulnerable children, families, and elders by building communities, capacity to address key issues from a multigenerational, cross-sector approach (Brown and Henkin, 2012). With funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and eight other funders, CFAA has been implemented in 23 rural and urban communities in eight states across the nation. While this model has not been rigorously evaluated, the Center for Assessment and Policy Development conducted a cross-site participatory evaluation from 2008 to 2012, which sought to track site-specific program outcomes and document implementation successes and challenges. Key findings from this evaluation are highlighted in the model resource guide, which describes positive outcomes related to education, health, safety and increased connection across age, race, and social class for multiple age groups (Brown and Henkin, 2012). Communities that implemented CFAA experienced expansion of social and organizational networks, increased civic engagement and leadership, and increased representation of diverse groups in local efforts (Brown and Henkin, 2012).

The Intergenerational Center developed the resource guide to facilitate implementation of CFAA (Brown and Henkin, 2012). This resource outlines five nonlinear phases to support integration of this approach into community building efforts:

1. **Initiating the process:** Define the geographic scope of the community, form community groups, and designate a collaborative agent.
2. **Developing and strengthening cross-sector collaboration:** Develop a cross-sector team of diverse organizations and residents that will serve as the key decisionmakers and leaders in planning and implementing the initiative.
3. **Building intergenerational resident leadership:** Provide the center's leadership training, which consists of a 30-hour curriculum.
4. **Assessing the community using an intergenerational lens:** Use assessment tools (e.g., asset-based community development, social capital surveys, livability surveys, focus groups, community surveys) to assist the team in selecting an initial issue to work on that is important to all ages.
5. **Using intergenerational approaches for strategic planning and action:** Develop and implement an action plan to address the selected issue/s (Brown and Henkin, 2012).

Given variability in CFAA approaches, the cost for implementing this approach varies.

Additional efforts to increase social cohesion and connectedness include

- Intentional neighboring or communities: These communities attempt to bring together neighbors from multiple generations regularly to develop relationships and provide reciprocal support and asset sharing to address issues faced by vulnerable populations (Generations of Hope, undated).

- Open streets: These initiatives enable diverse community members to collectively engage in a variety of activities (e.g., walking, cycling, skating, dancing) on selected local streets by temporarily closing streets to motorized traffic (University of Wisconsin, Population Health Institute, 2016).

Community Programs for Positive Youth Development

The Wyman’s Teen Outreach Program (TOP) is a promising strategy that promotes positive youth development for at-risk middle and high school students through curriculum-guided interactive group discussions; positive adult guidance and support; and community service learning (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2012b). The nine-month life skills program is implemented in school, after-school, or in a community-based setting and aims to prevent such negative youth behaviors as school failure and early pregnancy. The program combines supervised volunteer service activities (e.g., assisting at a hospital, peer tutoring, graffiti removal, building a playground or garden, petition or blood drives), adult support and guidance, and weekly one- to two-hour classroom sessions. Volunteer service activities are selected by the teens, based on community needs and resources and students’ capacities and interests. The teens are supervised and mentored by trained adult facilitators, and each teen participates in at least 20 hours of community service during the course of the program.

The curriculum, called Changing Scenes, uses small group discussions and role-playing to teach teens about adolescent health and development, including building social, emotional, and life skills; developing a positive sense of self; and connecting with others. Specific lesson topics include health and wellness (including sexuality), problem-solving, decisionmaking, goal setting, social identity, and many others. TOP groups of no more than 25 students typically meet weekly for at least 25 weeks. Facilitators tie together the service-learning experience and the curriculum and promote reflection on these activities.

TOP has been implemented in rural, urban, and suburban communities. Crime Solutions and Blueprints rate TOP as a promising program (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2012b). Two studies noted positive outcomes in risk of pregnancy, course failure, and academic suspension (Allen and Philliber, 2001; Allen et al., 1997). Cost estimates for program implementation range from \$410 and \$640 per student annually, and for every \$1.00 invested, there is a \$1.29 return on investment.⁵

Additional promising programs to consider are

- Gang Resistance Education and Training: A school-based intervention that aims to prevent violence and criminal activity, teach young people to avoid gang membership, and develop positive relationships with law enforcement. The program uses a cognitive-based curriculum to teach students life skills, such as conflict resolution, responsibility,

⁵ This return on investment was calculated for the pregnancy prevention effects; not the other outcomes (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2012b).

appreciating cultural diversity, and goal setting (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2012a).

- Communities That Care: A promising community-based intervention system that focuses on youth behavior problems such as alcohol and substance use initiation, delinquency, violence, and school dropout. Communities That Care uses a coalition to assess community and adolescents risk and protective factors, then implements and tests effective programs. Program implementation is continuously monitored, and risk and protective factors are reevaluated periodically (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, undated-c).

Mentoring

In 1997, Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) became the largest mentoring organization in the United States. It has served more than 2 million children and engaged nearly 400,000 volunteer members and families over the past ten years (Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, undated). The most-popular model of formal mentoring is *community-based mentoring* (CBM), which involves matching a carefully screened volunteer mentor with an at-risk youth. The pair meet about an hour weekly for one year or longer to engage in a variety of activities (e.g., sports, games, movies, shopping, reading, museumgoing, going to restaurants). Research on mentoring programs shows modest positive results for delinquency and aggressive outcomes (Tolan et al., 2014).

The BBBS CBM (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2011a) program provides one-to-one mentoring for at-risk youth between the ages of six and 18, with the goal of supporting the development of healthy youths by fulfilling their need for positive adult interaction, thereby reducing their risk for engagement in negative behavior and enhancing protective factors for positive behavior. Mentors are matched to mentees based on shared goals and interests. Before the match, BBBS case managers meet with the parent and child to identify goals (e.g., school attendance and academic performance, relationships with other children and siblings, general hygiene, learning new skills or developing a hobby). Given the importance of the match to the relationship, mentors are carefully recruited, screened, and matched. Over the course of the relationship, BBBS staff communicate with the mentor, youth, and parent/guardian to monitor progress, as well as provide guidance and support as needed. Mentors are expected to meet with the child for at least three to five hours per week for 12 months or longer.

BBBS provides mentoring program guidelines about screening, matching, training, supervising, and monitoring mentors/volunteers to local agencies. Local agencies implementing the BBBS CBM program are responsible for recruiting and screening volunteer applicants for matches and screening youths, as well as monitoring the relationship match. The program cost is approximately \$1,000 per mentor match. BBBS CBM is rated as an effective program by Crime Solutions (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2011a).

An additional effective mentoring program to consider is

- Eisenshower Quantum Opportunities (also known as the Eisenhower Foundation’s Quantum Opportunities Program): This year-round, multicomponent intervention targets at-risk youth during their four years in high school. The program includes tutoring, mentoring, life skills training, college preparation youth leadership training, and nominal financial stipends (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2015a).

Financial Stability Interventions

This category of interventions includes programs intended to increase financial stability of adults and youth through training and employment (see Table 4.5). There are many evidence-based programs that seek to address these issues, which are accessible from the various clearinghouses noted earlier in this chapter.

Table 4.5. Financial Stability Interventions

Approach/ Program	Description	Program Effects	Estimated Cost	Implementation Considerations
Vocational training Career academies (youth) Career pathways (adults)	Vocational training programs use career education and certification programs, on-the-job training, and industry-based education to support acquisition of job-specific skills. Program services may include job-search assistance, personal development resources, and other support services (e.g., child care, financial incentives).	A study of the effect of the Workforce Investment Act federal job training program—implemented in 12 states—indicate higher earnings (15–30%) and employment rate (12%) when participants are compared with non-participants	Average per capita direct expenditures for Adult Workforce Investment Act program are \$2,400–\$2,700. Blueprints estimates cost of career academies \$797 per student at startup and \$500 after that.	Initial reductions in wages during the training may impact student engagement. Offering financial compensation during training may address this challenge. Programs that offer support services are more effective than those that do not.
Subsidized transitional employment	Transitional employment programs provide temporary, subsidized paid jobs that are intended to lead to unsubsidized employment. These programs generally target hard-to-employ workers, such as those with limited or no job history, youth, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families recipients, or individuals with criminal records. Jobs may be supplemented with training and support services to help participants overcome employment barriers.	A study of the effect of two transitional subsidized employment programs indicate an increase earnings by about \$1,000 (26 percent) and a decrease in welfare receipt by about \$600 (10%) on average, over 18 months for one program. The other program observed statistically significant reductions in recidivism.	Program costs vary but are driven by the subsidy amount.	Programs do not typically have long-term effects on employment (i.e., after the subsidized employment ended). Programs that had sustained effects placed participants in jobs that had funds to support additional employees.

Vocational Training

Vocational training programs in the United States often serve individuals with little job experience or education. Expected outcomes of these programs include increased earnings and employment, as well as reduced recidivism. Adult-focused programs tend to include industry-specific education, certification, and on-the-job training. Vocational training programs for youth include career and technical education as well as summer work experience opportunities. School-based options typically focus on improved academic performance and labor market outcomes. There is strong evidence that vocational training for adults increases employment and earnings among participants, including young adults (Heinrich, 2013; Heinrich et al., 2013; Stevens, Kurlaender, and Grosz, 2015).

Industry-based vocational training programs positively affect employment outcomes for youth and adults (U.S. Departments of Labor, Commerce, Education, and Health and Human Services, 2014). Two types of vocational training programs that use industry-specific technical education, along with academic education and support services are Career Academics (youth) and Career Pathways (adults). The Career Academy Support Network provides support and guides the development of the almost 7,000 Career Academies in school districts across the nation. There are several examples of Career Pathways implementation in the United States, including national or regional initiatives such as Pathways to Prosperity Network, the Alliance for Quality Care Pathways, and the National Career Cluster Framework; initiatives at the state-level such as the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative and Oregon’s Green Career Pathways Roadmaps; and other programs such as WorkAdvance and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program.

Career Academies operate as a school-within-a-school, where high school students work in small learning communities within high schools. The programs combine academic and technical career curricula centered on a specific theme and offer career development and work-based learning opportunities through partnership with local employers. This model seeks to enhance school engagement and performance and provide students with the credentials and skills needed to successfully transition to post-secondary education and/or a career. Each small learning community comprises a small number of students working with the same group of teachers with diverse educational backgrounds for two to four years of high school. These small teams promote a personalized and supportive learning environment for students.

Students apply to enter an academy in ninth or tenth grade. The career classes develop knowledge and provide exposure to the full range of career options in a locally healthy career field (e.g., health care, finance, technology, communications, public service). Work-based education opportunities include work experience through a paid or unpaid work internship or community service assignment. As seniors, students receive both college and career counseling and develop a postgraduate plan that may include college and/or a career. All academy requirements can be completed within the regular school day, with the exception of work internships and possible college classes.

Local employers also play a major role in Career Academies, including serving on steering committees that help develop the plan of work-related activities. Employer representatives serve as guest speakers, job shadowing field trip hosts, mentors, and supervisors. Employers might also hire program graduates.

Career Academies have had a significant, positive effect on earnings among young men. However, there was no significant effect on young women's employment outcomes or on participants' high school completion rate, post-secondary education or attainment, or social adjustment outcomes (Kemple and Willner, 2008). The cost is approximately \$297 per student, and about \$500 per student after start up (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, undated-b). Career Academies are rated effective by Crime Solutions.

Career Pathways offer job-specific training in high-growth industries or specific occupation sectors for low-skilled individuals, incumbent workers, out-of-school youth, and hard-to-employ adults. The U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor define career pathways as

a series of connected education and training strategies and support services that enable individuals to secure industry-relevant certification and obtain employment within an occupational area and to advance to higher levels of future education and employment in that area. (U.S. Department of Education, 2012)

Career Pathways programs promote attainment of industry-specific credentials from post-secondary institutions in such areas as health care, advanced manufacturing, or information technology (Kazis, 2016). However, as some workers lack the basic education and skills necessary for success in postsecondary education, some Career Pathways may include bridge programs. Bridge programs may be the first phase (basic skills training) of the career pathway, as they provide industry-relevant basic education and training in fundamental skills (e.g., reading, math, writing, English language, soft skills), as well as industry-specific training. Two additional phases of Career Pathways include entry-level training and upgrade training and education (King and Prince, 2015).

According to a MDRC report on Career Pathways, there are four key elements in Career Pathways programs (Kazis, 2016, p. 2):

- **Aligned, connected programs:** a sequence of educational programs that lead to increasingly advanced credentials (for example, a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, industry-recognized certificates, and postsecondary degrees), and that are coordinated by aligning learning expectations, curricula, and institutional links.
- **Multiple entry and exit points:** transparent and easy-to-navigate on- and off-ramps to education and work that enable individuals to earn credentials that “stack” or “roll up” to recognized high school and postsecondary credentials.
- **Focus on careers and employer engagement:** targeting high-growth sectors and occupations, encouraging employers to participate in curriculum and program design and instruction, and providing work-based learning experiences.

- **Support services that promote student progress and completion:** academic and other supports for underprepared individuals, including curricular attention to mastering “soft skills,” quality instruction that integrates career or technical skills and academic learning, guidance and peer support for educational and career decisions, and financial aid when necessary.

The clearinghouse What Works for Health indicates that there is some evidence that Career Pathways programs increase employability, employment earnings, and other job outcomes (University of Wisconsin, Population Health Institute, 2017b). Cost data are not currently available for this approach.

Subsidized Transitional Employment

Subsidized employment is a promising approach to improve earnings and other labor market outcomes of populations with serious or multiple barriers to employment (e.g., physical and behavioral health issues, including disabilities; criminal justice system involvement; family obligations; limited resources; discrimination based on characteristics such as race, gender, and age). Typically, funds are provided to third-party employers (e.g., public, nonprofit, for-profit) that provide jobs to eligible workers (Dutta-Gupta, 2016). The duration of employment opportunities offered by subsidized employment programs range from temporary (transitional) to long-term. These programs provide income in exchange for work; reduce the perceived risk or actual cost of hiring or increasing the wages of a worker; and provide work experience to disadvantaged workers. This results in societal benefits (e.g., improved health, strengthened families, reduced demand for public benefits and services) (Dutta-Gupta, 2016).

Transitional employment programs are the most common type of subsidized employment program (Bloom, 2013). They typically target the hard-to-employ workers, and offer time-limited, subsidized, and wage-paying jobs that are intended to lead to unsubsidized employment. These programs may include training, job placement assistance, and/or support services to help workers overcome barriers to employment. Programs differ along several dimensions, including the following:

- **Program purpose:** target populations and barriers, competitive employment versus income support, and scale
- **Work placements:** sector, employer size, long-term placement strategy, employer of record/payroll, and advancement opportunities
- **Subsidy configuration:** type, depth,⁶ and length of subsidy
- **Work expectations:** supervision, team environment, and graduated responsibilities
- **Training:** type and structure of training

⁶ *Subsidy depth* refers to the proportion of the employer cost that is subsidized (all or partial). *Depth* can also refer to the manner in which the subsidy is disbursed (i.e., at a steady rate over the life of the subsidy period or a reduction in the percentage of the subsidy over time).

- **Additional services:** wraparound and employment search and retention services (Dutta-Gupta, 2016).

There is evidence that transitional employment programs increase employment in the short term, however, longer-term employment outcomes for seriously hard to employ workers have not been observed (Bloom, 2013). Programs that do seem to have longer-term effects include the Catholic Charities Community Transitional Jobs Program, Personal Roads to Individual Development and Employment, and some subsidized jobs programs supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Baider and Frank, 2006; Bloom, 2010). In addition, transitional employment programs, such as the Center for Employment Opportunities in New York City, observed reduced recidivism among individuals who had been incarcerated (Butler et al., 2012). Results of transitional employment programs for youth, such as summer youth jobs, are also mixed. Positive effects include reduced violence, incarceration, mortality, and improved academic outcomes; however, evidence is inconclusive that these programs improve employment outcomes (Ross and Kazis, 2016). Also, as the structure of transitional employment programs vary, the cost of implementation is also variable, although the primary cost driver is the subsidy amount.

Community Capacity-Building Interventions

This category of interventions includes a program that focuses on mobilizing communities to identify and address social development needs (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6. Community Capacity-Building Interventions

Approach/ Program	Description	Program Effects	Estimated Cost	Implementation Considerations
Community development	Collective action by communities to use resources to identify and address common problems and needs. Efforts support development of infrastructure, economic, public services, community facilities, housing, and other identified needs. The process encourages social connectedness and relationship development.	This approach has not been rigorously evaluated yet.	As activities are customized to the target community and their objectives, costs will vary.	Community programs require regular meetings with community members. Community members need to feel like equal partners and have the experiences acknowledged. Recognize past trauma and reframe re-traumatizing the community.

Community Development

Across the country, such communities as those in Phillips and Coahoma Counties use community development strategies to address gaps in their capacities. One capacity-building strategy that has had some success in strengthening communities is the Trauma Informed Community Building (TICB) model. TICB acknowledges and seeks to mitigate the challenges to community development that result from trauma in the community. This approach is based on the BRIDGE Housing Corporation’s implementation in two housing San Francisco sites (Weinstein, Wolin, and Rose, 2014). The model uses a comprehensive, multistakeholder approach to develop resilience in traumatized communities to combat the effects of unresolved trauma such as violence, crime, poverty, social isolation, poor education, and racism. Through development of programs and services, community building, and housing development, TICB seeks to empower communities to work collectively to establish a foundation and supports for effective delivery of programs and services, and to create conditions for community and individual change that can be sustained long-term (Urban Institute, undated). Target outcomes include improved health and mental health outcomes, improved neighborhood safety, and increased social connectedness and physical activity.

SAMHSA identifies six key principles of a trauma-informed approach to community building (SAMHSA, undated):

1. **safety:** prevents violence across the lifespan and creates safe physical environments
2. **trustworthiness:** fosters positive relationships among residents, local government, police, schools and others
3. **empowerment:** ensures opportunities for growth are available to all
4. **collaboration:** promotes involvement of residents and partnership among agencies
5. **peer support:** engages residents to work together on issues of common concern
6. **history, gender, and culture:** values and supports history, culture and diversity.

Specific community-building activities include gardening, group exercises, community art projects, housing development, leadership training, and supports for low-income residents (e.g., community centers, housing). Because activities are customized to the target community and their objectives, costs will vary. While preliminary research supports the efficacy of this approach, additional research is needed to confirm its effects (Gordon et al., 2015).

Education Interventions

As the final set of “root causes” interventions discussed in this section, this category of interventions includes programs intended to improve youth academic performance, reduce behavioral issues, and prevent school disengagement (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7. Education Interventions

Approach/ Program	Description	Program Effects	Estimated Cost	Implementation Considerations
Academic and social development	Programs aim to improve social and emotional learning, academic performance, and behavior of children and adolescents through cognitive-behavioral strategies and collaborative decision-making between students, parents, and teachers.	A longitudinal study of Positive Action in two low-income, high-crime rural counties in North Carolina indicate statistically significant positive effects on self-esteem scores and school hassles scores.	Washington State Institution of Public Policy estimates that it costs \$444 per participant and yields \$14,002 in savings.	The program has been implemented in low-income, high crime rural counties. If funding is an issue, start with the lowest-performing schools, preferably elementary schools.
Drop-out prevention	Programs typically target at-risk youth with activities including mentoring, counseling, vocational and social-emotional training, college preparation, tutoring, and/or case management. Participants may receive financial awards or sanctions to incentivize positive behavior.	Two studies of 238 students in Minneapolis high schools indicate small, positive effects on staying in school, small, potentially positive effects on progressing in school.	The most recent cost estimates are \$1,400 per student (2001–2002 school year).	Check & Connect (C&C) has been implemented in a variety of settings (schools, communities, correctional facilities) in urban communities. This program relies heavily on family engagement.

Academic and Social Development

Positive Action (National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (2011c) is a curriculum-based program that aims to improve social and emotional learning, academic performance, and behavior of children and adolescents from grades K–12. This program has been delivered in school, home, or community settings in rural, urban, and suburban communities for various racial and ethnic groups. The program’s underlying philosophy is based broadly on the theory of self-concept. It relies on students’ intrinsic motivation for developing and maintaining positive behavioral patterns. The overall program goal of promoting positive action is accomplished by teaching skills focused on learning and motivation for achieving success and happiness for everyone. The premise is that students feel good about themselves when they do positive actions, and there is always a positive way to do everything. This philosophy is represented by the self-reinforcing Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle, which supposes that positive *thoughts* lead to positive actions, positive *actions* lead to positive *feelings* about oneself, and positive *feelings* lead to more positive *thoughts*.

The Positive Action program curriculum includes interactive, ready-to-use kits that contain 140 grade level–specific scripted lessons that last 15 to 20 minutes, as well as all the materials needed for schools, families, and communities to teach the lessons and activities and teaching

methods. Topics covered in the unit lessons include nutrition, problem-solving, decisionmaking, study skills, self-control, managing personal resources, social skills, self-honesty, and setting and achieving goals.

There is evidence that the Positive Action program reduces violent behavior, substance use, bullying, suspensions and absenteeism; increases math and reading standardized test scores; and positively impacts student-reported positive affect, life satisfaction, depression, and disaffection with learning, as well as teacher-rated academic ability, motivation, and school-level absenteeism (Bavarian et al., 2013; Beets et al., 2009; Flay and Allred, 2003; Lewis et al., 2013; Li et al., 2011; Snyder et al., 2010). The likelihood that the Positive Action program will yield benefits greater than the costs is 87 percent, with the annual estimated per participant cost of \$444 (in 2016 dollars) (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2017e). Total costs vary by the implementation design (school, home, community), the targeted grades, and with the number of optional components that are included. Instructor kits range from \$390 to \$460 for each teacher. Optional kits range from \$75 to \$1,450 and include instructional materials on bullying prevention, drug education, conflict resolution, parenting and family classes and cost (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, undated-e).

Additional promising academic and social development programs to consider include

- Caring School Community (formerly known as the Child Development Project): This is a whole-school program for elementary school students aimed at promoting prosocial values, improving academic achievement, and preventing drug use, violence, and delinquency through four components: (1) class meetings, (2) cross-age buddies, (3) home-based activities, and (4) school-wide community-building activities (Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, undated-b).
- Behavior Monitoring and Reinforcement (also known as Achievement Mentoring): This is a two-year intervention for middle school students at risk for juvenile delinquency, school failure, and substance use that consists of four components: (1) monitoring performance, (2) providing systematic feedback, (3) attaching point values to the students, and (4) helping the student figure out how he/she can earn more points (Washington Institute for Public Policy, 2012).

Drop-Out Prevention

C&C is an individualized dropout-prevention program used with K–12 students who show warning signs of disengagement from school (e.g., behavior problems, poor attendance) or are at risk of dropping out of school (Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, undated-c). The C&C program was designed to be implemented in K–12 schools but has been adapted for use in other settings (e.g., community, after-school programs, post-secondary education) and with special populations (e.g., youth with truancy issues, youth in the juvenile justice system, youth in foster care). The program relies on monitoring of school performance, mentoring, case management, and other supports. Students are paired with a trained mentor—typically graduate students or community members with

training in human services fields—who develops a trusting relationship with the student and provides academic and social support. It involves the following:

- “Check” component relates to the mentors’ duty to continually monitor student performance and progress (including the student’s attendance, incidence of suspensions, course grades, and credits) using data available to school personnel.
- “Connect” component involves mentors—in partnership with other school staff, family members, and community service organizations—giving individualized attention to students through timely, data-driven interventions to help students solve problems, build skills, and enhance competence. Mentors are also expected to have frequent contact with family members for at least two years.
- All students receive the basic interventions and weekly or biweekly structured discussions between the mentor and student about school progress, importance of staying in school, problem-solving strategies (e.g., conflict resolution, and coping with challenges).
- High-risk students receive customized interventions that focus on problem solving (including mediation and social skills development), academic support (through homework assistance, schedule changes, and tutoring), and recreational and community service activities.

C&C is the only dropout-prevention program reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse that was found to have strong evidence of positive effects on staying in school. In addition, there is some evidence that C&C positively affects student progress in school (Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, undated-c). The cost of implementing C&C is site-specific and depends on numerous factors such as who are serving as mentors, numbers of mentors used, number of students served, and training conducted. In 2001–2002, program developers reported that implementing C&C in secondary schools costs about \$1,400 per student, but there are no more recent publicly available cost estimates.

An additional promising dropout-prevention program to consider is

- Twelve Together, a one-year peer support and mentoring program for middle and high school students offering weekly after-school discussion groups led by trained adult volunteers, homework assistance, college visits, and an annual weekend retreat. The program targets students with poor academic performance or disciplinary problems, placing them at risk for dropping out of school (Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, undated-d).

5. Framework for Developing a Crime and Violence Reduction Funding Portfolio

The preceding sections described the role of philanthropies in community violence reduction, a needs assessment for crime and violence in Phillips and Coahoma Counties, and research-based programs and practices that match those needs. This chapter will integrate all the information to develop a framework for creating a community violence prevention/intervention funding strategy for the Mississippi Delta. The insights provided by the interviews with foundations, site visits and discussions in both communities, along with the trends in community-driven violence prevention all endorse adopting a public health perspective. The perspective provides recommendations for how to maximize the likelihood of success through using a set of steps to make evidence-based decisions when planning a community violence prevention plan.

The framework developed here will build on the needs assessment and evidence-based solutions to enable the community to think through a comprehensive crime and violence prevention strategy to maximize impact and the likelihood of success. Furthermore, given the diversity of efforts already underway in the Mississippi Delta, an overarching strategy that ensures consistency and reduces redundancy would be beneficial. Research on the implementation and success of crime-reduction initiatives has compiled a lot of lessons that can instruct a new initiative.

Recently, there has been a shift in criminal justice toward multiagency collaborations in an effort to respond to crime problems (see, for a longer discussion, Klofas, Hipple, and McGarrell, 2010). Efforts such as Boston Ceasefire, Strategic Approaches to Community Safety, Project Safe Neighborhood, the Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative, as well as the Drug Market Initiative all lauded the multiagency, action-research model for tailoring each project to the local context and a specific crime problem. McGarrell and Hipple (2014) used a panel of subject-matter experts—including representatives from law enforcement, prosecution, social services, community leaders, and researchers—to help identify the key dimensions needed for successful implementation of a strategic crime reduction initiative, regardless of jurisdiction or crime problem. That is, they sought to define the characteristics of multiagency crime-reduction initiatives that have been successfully implemented. The subject-matter experts identified four key dimensions: governance and project management, partnerships, data and analysis, and feedback and awareness (McGarrell and Hipple, 2014). These key dimensions should be applied according to the local context for the best chance at successful program implementation.

Challenges in implementation are, of course, not specific to criminal justice application. There is a growing research literature on implementation science, which seeks to understand how best practices can be taken to scale—that is, how they can be disseminated and implemented with fidelity across large numbers of communities (and nationwide, when applicable). Indeed,

research on implementing new practices and programs from a variety of fields suggests that buy-in from influential leadership is critical to implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005; McGarrell and Hipple, 2014); that the participation of leadership in adapting the practices and programs to the local setting is particularly important to successful implementation (Rogers, 2002; Sales et al., 2006); and that cultivating “champions” (i.e., well-respected individuals within an organization or community) who can serve as peer consultants and role models also can facilitate implementation and, ultimately, adoption and sustainability of new practices and programs (Fixsen et al., 2005). The first step to ensuring these criteria are met is to develop a coalition or strong local steering committee.

There are many evidence-informed guides and frameworks for assessing community problems, selecting appropriate interventions, and implementing them. We base our findings on the CDC’s Planning for and Selecting High-Impact Interventions to Improve Community Health (Perkinson, Freire, and Stocking, 2017) The CDC recommends a number of steps and processes for conducting a community needs assessment, intervention selection, tailoring approaches, delivering programs, and tracking and evaluating results, as well as how to develop a comprehensive strategy that will yield maximum impact. We follow this with a discussion of implementation considerations grounded in the ten components that we recommend be considered when implementing research-based best practices. Throughout these sections, pertinent results from other sections are highlighted.

Building a Coalition/Local Steering Committee

Many experts, researchers, and federal agencies strongly recommend involving the community from the beginning of the process of selecting a comprehensive strategy because it will develop a sense of ownership (Chervin et al., 2005; Wolff, 2001). A coalition or local steering committee would work through the process together from the beginning, using the information provided in this report. The strength of this approach would be the representation of multiple perspectives, increased community buy-in, building community capacity and ownership, and perhaps most importantly, making sure that the efforts are well received and embraced by the community, which will facilitate every step of the process.

The CDC suggests reaching out to institutions that have an interest in violence prevention, such as schools, churches, parks, recreational centers, businesses, and civic, service, and cultural groups, along with criminal justice system actors, such as local law enforcement, institutional and community corrections, and the court systems, as well as their local federal counterparts (Perkinson, Freire, and Stocking, 2017). Many of these groups were contacted over the course of this project with mixed success for the needs assessment, which may or may not signal their willingness to participate in a larger coalition. However, it should be noted that asking a community stakeholder to participate in an interview is not at all the same as asking them to join a community effort, and conclusions about their refusal to participate should not be made about

their willingness to work collaboratively or commitment to their communities. In addition to these stakeholder groups, the CDC recommends including influential community members and parents as part of the effort, along with representatives from social services, local entrepreneurs, parents, grandparents, and even the youths themselves can contribute to the discussion.

Any coalition will fall apart without a strong leadership structure to help keep everyone working in harmony. It should include members of the community and intended participant groups; for instance, to implement a gang intervention or an ex-offender initiative, include members of these groups in your coalition. Cultural diversity is also key, as culture can play a large role in how a population will respond to an intervention—which is why it is key to include members of all affected groups in the coalition. As coalition activities develop, leaders will need to be formally designated to prevent the duplication of effort and “turf wars.”

Many of the philanthropies emphasized taking a multipronged approach to community-level crime and violence prevention, as they recognized that a single intervention/program conducted in isolation is unlikely to solve the problem. Therefore, they spent considerable amounts of time building local relationships, collecting information about the problem, and crafting localized approaches. Foundation involvement in building coalitions ranges from provision of seed funds to build the coalitions without direct involvement to having program officers take a more-active role in gathering groups and funding start-up activities. There are three key models of foundation involvement in coalition building: (1) a foundation chairs or leads this effort, (2) a foundation serves as a coalition partner, and (3) the foundation only provides funding. There are pros and cons to each approach, but there is no consensus as to which is ultimately more effective and sustainable. Coalitions require strong leadership, so if that is not sourced locally, it will likely need to come from the outside in the form of the foundation leadership, a consultant, or another outside organization with experience successfully leading these efforts.

Finally, Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) reviewed 80 publications to identify what makes a community coalition successful. It requires a great deal of investment in developing the members’ capacities to collaborate, as they will not all be at the same level. Members need to core knowledge and skills to critically understand the problem, review qualitative and quantitative data, and collaboratively set goals and priorities, along with a commitment to continue to monitor progress and provide feedback. The importance of ensuring that the coalition has members from diverse groups with the knowledge, skills, motivation relationships, work climate, and commitment cannot be overstated—an effective community coalition is one with a shared vision and firm understanding that the coalition embraces objective research and the public health process.

Selecting, Implementing, and Monitoring Evidence-Based Programming

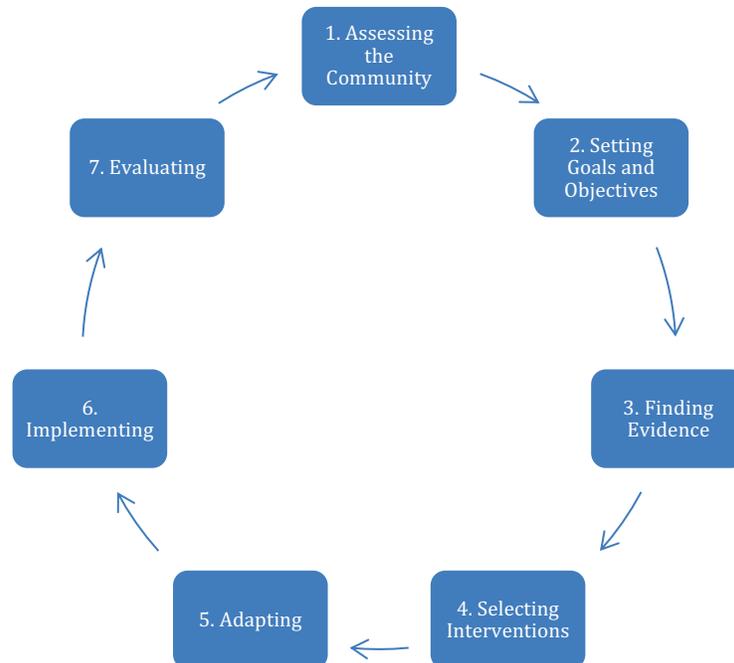
Reducing crime and violence and improving community health is challenging, and there is no single way to approach it. The CDC, along with multiple other federal agencies charged with

community health, have developed multiple guides for local policymakers and practitioners to meet that challenge by going through evidence-based processes to identify problems in the community, identifying resources, and then selecting, implementing, and monitoring those interventions.

The general process for the selection, implementation, and monitoring of evidence-based practices is almost universally agreed upon by the field, and depicted in Figure 5.1 (Glasgow, Vogt, and Boles, 1999). This report generally represents the first three steps in identifying and implementing the right approaches. However, as *it was done outside the context of a community coalition*, it should not be considered to be finalized. The work in this report should provide a good starting point for the coalition.

However, this is just the beginning for planning a comprehensive approach to crime and violence prevention. The next steps involve selecting the appropriate intervention (or suite of interventions), which is accompanied by locating resources, involving the community, hiring and training staff; adapting the intervention to the local setting, the actual program implementation, and then continually monitoring and evaluating the intervention(s) to ensure it is having the intended outcome.

Figure 5.1. Process for Implementing Evidence-Based Strategies for Public Health



In the next sections, we review each step in this framework for selecting the intervention strategy, along with different considerations that should factor into decisions at the philanthropy level.

Assessing the Community

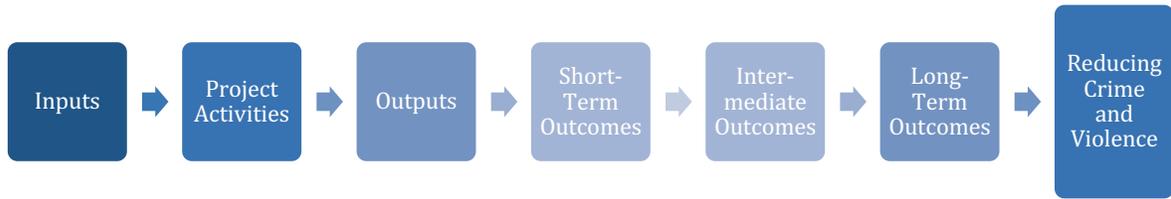
This report provides a preliminary needs assessment of the crime and violence problem and assembled the views of their causes from a variety of perspectives. This could be supplemented by information gathered by a local coalition, as the coalition may have views that were not included. If this was done by the full community, different data sources may have been integrated. For example, more law enforcement data from Coahoma County might have been available. This report can serve as a basis for understanding and a good starting point for discussion, as coalition members will no doubt have more ideas informed by local experience. This process of assessing the community helps build the coalition's capacity by reviewing, discussing, and debating objective data points to achieve agreement about the crime problems in their community.

Setting Goals and Objectives

There were varying views about what needs to change in the community in order to reduce crime and violence and even about how big an issue crime and violence is in each community. The community identified their largest crime concerns, but interviewees were never asked to articulate how they think it needs to change. This exercise is imperative for setting realistic goals that diverse groups can agree on. The goal should be a broad statement of what you want to achieve, with the objectives being specific and measurable things you will need to do to obtain those goals. It is important that the objectives are attainable with available resources; are specific; and detail who should achieve them, along with what, where, and when they should occur. Additionally, the community will have their own priorities. For example, they may prioritize strategies that will have an immediate impact over those that will take longer to accrue benefits. Or they may choose to focus on strategies that are outside of the criminal justice system because they do not wish to expose the community to different policing strategies that could potentially exacerbate problems between police and the community. This is where the coalition approach is an advantage, as getting a consensus about specific goals and objectives needs to be driven by the community if it is going to be accepted.

The CDC recommends the use of logic models in the process to help visualize the assumptions and rationale behind the different options—which is actually built backwards starting with the goals and objectives (Goldman and Schmalz, 2006). This can be a group activity for the coalition or its subcommittees to bring people together and build a common understanding and set priorities. Logic models can help with the selection of the most high-impact interventions by mapping out the connections between problems and solutions and the outcomes they aim to achieve. The generic process that starts at the end (ultimate goal) and works backwards to identify the types of programs that will achieve these goals is outlined in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2. Logic Model Process



For example, working off the generic end goal of decreasing crime and violence, the first step of defining the final box is to get accurate information on the metrics you will use to determine success. You can select multiple metrics (e.g., homicide rates, gun crime, property crime, juvenile crime, the risk factors associated with criminal involvement) or concentrate efforts on only one that you believe has the biggest impact on the ultimate goal of reducing crime and violence. Then you need to trace backwards through the outcome time periods. You can start generic and then make them more specific and measurable as you work through the process. For some examples of tracing outcomes over time, organized by different themes, see Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Mapping Outcomes Backwards from Goals and Objectives

Target	Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in reporting crimes to the police • Increase in police presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of crime in high-crime areas • Reduction in repeat offending/victimization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in violence • Increased police legitimacy
Risk factor: family instability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents gain knowledge and skills about positive parenting • Parents receive resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in time parents and children spend together • Improved parent child bonding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved family stability • Reduction in delinquency
Risk factor: financial hardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge and skills • Job-placement assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in job placement and retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in unemployment
Risk factor: negative social norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in prosocial recreational opportunities • Increase in prosocial adult bonding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in exposure to negative peers • Decreased endorsement of antisocial behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internalization of prosocial norms • Decrease in gang involvement
Risk factor: delinquency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in school attendance • Increase in bonding to prosocial adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in graduation • Increase in exposure to prosocial peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in delinquency • Decrease in gang involvement
Risk factor: urban decay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in blighted properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced opportunity to commit crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in crime values • Increase in property values

Target	Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreased public safety hazard associated with blighted properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased investment in surrounding homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in community pride

The next step is to map those short-term outcomes onto outputs—measures of program implementation, such as delivery of x hours of parenting classes, training and assignment of y mentors, or providing job training to z community members. These outputs are then traced back yet again to program activities, or interventions, that are responsible for creating those outputs and outcomes. Finally, the inputs refer to the information used to select the intervention, including the community needs and assets assessment. This is an iterative process, and selections will vary depending on desired outcomes, selected interventions, partners and partner priorities, timeline, and (perhaps most influential of all) available resources.

Finding Evidence

The review of evidence-based practices that match the community needs assessment is a great foundation for this step, as we vetted all of them to ensure they have been subjected to high-quality, rigorous research. It can be supplemented with reviews of other types of programs if other problems are identified in the needs assessment conducted by the coalition, or if different goals and objectives are selected by the group. The approach described in this report entailed combing through various best practices clearinghouses and reviewing research articles to find approaches where there is strong agreement within the scientific community that they work. This review is in no way exhaustive; there are hundreds of programs with evidence of effectiveness that may be worth considering. When other programs are considered, the research evidence must be critically evaluated because not all evaluations are equal. We only included programs where there is consensus of effectiveness by only using sources that vet the research they include. This approach is restrictive because newer programs may not have been subjected to as much research. Someone from a strong research background with methodological expertise should provide guidance and oversight if/when other programs or approaches are considered.

Selecting Interventions

The selection of the actual interventions will be based on a variety of factors, and the coalition should remember that one size does not necessarily fit all. The CDC recommends that coalitions consider the feasibility of each approach or combination of approaches, given the available resources; as one program will not likely solve a problem as complex as community crime and violence (Glasgow, Vogt, and Boles, 1999). The acceptability and cultural appropriateness of each approach by community members and decisionmakers should also be considered. This is a good opportunity to consider and discuss how the crime and violence problems reflect community disparities and ensure again that representatives from the communities that are most impacted are at the table. As your coalition moves forward and

identifies solutions, it will be important to consider how approaches will address these disparities and advance equity. Reducing disparities involves reducing the gaps in crime and violence rates and/or risk factors of populations and subgroups. The appropriate blend of strategies and programming should be influenced by a wide assortment of considerations, which should be discussed jointly.

- **Timeline:** How quickly would each approach take to accrue benefits? How long does it take to implement? Do you want to include a variety of approaches that address both immediate need and long-term change?
- **Cost:** How much does each approach cost? What proportion of funds should be allocated to which priorities?
- **Capacity, staffing, and training:** Who needs to be involved in each approach? What are the capacity, staffing, and training requirements for each approach? Is it feasible? What type of training and technical assistance will be required? Does it already exist in the community?
- **Likelihood of success and impact:** Is there information about how often the intervention is successfully implemented and creates positive outcomes? What factors are associated with success? How much can the intervention impact the various intended goals and how can this be measured?
- **Difficulty:** How challenging is the implementation and coordination? Do all the necessary partners have the capacity to work in alignment with one another? Selecting an intervention that is too difficult can be demoralizing and derail a coalition.
- **Complementarity and scale-up:** How do the various approaches complement/supplement one another? Do they work together or have conflicting components? Which priorities do they cover and which do they miss? Can they build into a larger effort over time to cover all priorities?
- **Ground-level support:** Will the community accept this program? How can we incentivize its use?

Once an overarching strategy with complementary evidence-based approaches is selected, the coalition should make sure they have all the necessary partners engaged and on board and create a comprehensive plan and associated timeline for implementation and evaluation.

Adapting, Implementation, and Evaluating

The next steps are beyond the scope of this chapter, but, in general terms, they involve how to tailor the approach to a specific context, how to implement the programs, and how to monitor the program to make sure that it is creating its intended outcomes. First, in the adaptation phase, the group should consider how the evidence-based program or practice should be implemented in their local context. *None of the core components of an evidenced-based program should be altered*, as this could reduce its effectiveness, but rather, some can be tweaked to make sure they are relevant for the specific population. As noted in the previous chapter, many of the evidence-based programs have not been implemented in areas similar to the Mississippi Delta, so they may need to be adapted. There is a lot of research on how evidence-based programs can be altered,

such as Rural Health Information Hub (Rural Health Information Hub, undated) and DHHS Family and Youth Services Bureau (Family and Youth Services Bureau, undated), and relevant academic literature (Chen et al., 2013; Moore, Bumbarger, and Cooper, 2013; Smith and Caldwell, 2007).

In the implementation phase, it is important to monitor progress. The field of implementation science has taught the evidence-based practice community many lessons about how to enhance program implementation and ensure it is done with fidelity—meaning that it was done as intended. Most of the programs described in the previous chapter have implementation guidebooks, groups that will provide training and technical assistance, or other information to help you with implementation. For more information about implementation science and discussions on how to ensure proper implementation see the wealth of implementation science literature (Breitenstein et al., 2010; Damschroder et al., 2009; Fixsen et al., 2005; McGarrell and Hipple, 2014).

Finally, the CDC and other federal agencies, along with most of the foundation project managers that were interviewed, recommend evaluating interventions. This is vitally important for a few reasons: (1) when people or programs are evaluated and know the criteria for which they are evaluated, they are more likely to implement the program as intended, (2) it allows you to be flexible and make changes when certain approaches are not working, and (3) it provides documentation of effectiveness, which helps motivate everyone to continue working and demonstrates effectiveness if or when you need to apply for additional funding. Evaluation also allows you to work iteratively, so that if you make positive changes in one or two areas, you can move on to the next priority. There are a wealth of resources available to help with evaluation, including both academic articles and practical user guides (Brinkerhoff et al., 2012; Glasgow et al., 1999; Mertens and Wilson, 2012).

Additional Considerations

RAND has conducted a study on how to ensure success when implementing an evidence-based program into practice and identified ten important components (Ramchand et al., 2014). They reviewed both the academic literature and held discussions with researchers from a variety of fields to understand how evidence-based practices successfully make it into the field. They identified components or broad categories of strategies that resulted in the adoption of these best-practices. The first three are included in Chapters 3 and 4 of this report—the evidence of (1) identified need, (2) research quality, and (3) intervention effectiveness. They also describe seven other external features that can greatly enhance the likelihood of success:

1. **Leadership buy-in and support from local stakeholders.** Leadership and stakeholder buy-in ensures that programs are championed and commissioned by individuals in a position to execute change within an organization. In this context, it means getting all the stakeholders engaged beyond just conducting interviews, which was not always

accomplished by this project. We believe that it will take quite a bit of time and effort to get leadership buy-in and support from all the relevant stakeholders in the Mississippi Delta community; however, there are many that expressed a great deal of enthusiasm and support. Notably, the new police chief in Helena-West Helena is engaging in a similar effort and appears eager to spearhead this type of effort.

2. **Funding or other institutional support.** It is important to finance the program's start-up, staff pay, and the infrastructure necessary to keep a program running on a day-to-day basis. Funding is key to any initiative, and how these efforts are supported will likely be critical to bringing people together who do not have current funding to provide these types of programs and services. In fact, many interviewees reported that effective programs were de-funded, so a commitment of long(er) term funding may be required to attract people who have been disillusioned by a sporadic funding history. Funding is particularly challenging in a small rural area with a low tax base, where such local government-supported services as police and school systems are already underfunded. External funds will be required to start, develop, and sustain a community-led public safety effort.
3. **Collaboration with credible sponsors.** When considering new programs, it is best to have the target audiences involved at the development stage. It is also wise to collaborate across and within organizations to promote buy-in and innovation. This can be accomplished through thoughtfully and carefully pulling together a coalition and/or community steering committee who will already have some credibility with your target audience. Many of the foundations have developed strong partnerships with either research teams or professional trainers to establish their legitimacy when they go in to a new location. These partnerships enable them to demonstrate prior success and provide a road map for new local initiatives. Many foundation representatives reported that their violence portfolios were successful because they involved people, groups, and organizations that have successfully gone through a similar process.
4. **Provision of incentives for development of policies.** Once in place, incentives or rewards for successful implementation can be helpful in promoting widespread diffusion. This is not limited to monetary rewards, but recognition for good work is required to keep people motivated. Crime and violence prevention initiatives are notoriously challenging, complex, and take a long time to see results, so celebrating milestones and early successes is important. Several foundations reported that they did not expect to see reductions in violence for many years, so they had to find other earlier milestones (e.g., creating new partnerships, adding new clients, holding outreach events—see the logic model process in Figure 5.2 for an example of how to identify and track outcomes over time) to demonstrate that they were on track and keep partners engaged. This requires consistent data collection, review, and a transparent schedule of rewards.
5. **Peer network supportive of adoption.** Individuals generally learn about new practices from their peers, so creating a network of peers who buy into programs being rolled out is critical for successful diffusion. Other philanthropies reported using this approach in several different ways: (1) They use peer networks of professional technical assistance providers who have long histories of successfully starting programs in other locations to train their grantees, and (2) they may even use peers to deliver interventions because they are seen as more credible by the target populations. For example, several foundations

fund projects that use peer street outreach workers who were former gang members to interrupt the cycle of violence in current gang disputes.

6. **Marketing materials.** Transparency at all levels is paramount. Dissemination materials can facilitate the process of diffusion through marketing and the promotion of ideas both within the coalition and within the community. Step-by-step toolkits or guidelines can assist in this effort. It is important that everyone in the community understands what the coalition is doing, what its ultimate goal is, and the specific programs and approaches it is using. This is essential for program coordination, but also for aligning community expectations.
7. **Cultural alignment.** Adopting new practices takes time and may be hindered by incompatible values and competing priorities. Working with a local coalition that represents multiple viewpoints, which often will not align, is challenging, but vital to success. For example, there were conflicting views about how to solve the crime and violence problem in the Mississippi Delta, and some of them are incompatible with one another. Getting people to come together and to listen, learn, and reach agreement on a set of priorities will be critical for making progress. This can take a lot of time and energy, but through close work and starting with priorities that everyone can agree on, a cultural shift can happen in which everyone ends up on the same page. Many of the evidence-based approaches discussed in this report may not be culturally appropriate for the Mississippi Delta and/or may need to be adopted to its unique context.

Conclusion

Our recommendation is to create a local coalition or steering committee. This is based on the interviews with philanthropies, community needs assessment, best practices review, and expert knowledge and experience with implementing community-based crime and violence initiatives. This coalition/committee should represent the diversity of stakeholder groups, key leaders, and community representatives in the area. This group should go through the process for selecting, implementing, and monitoring evidence-based programming. Several of the first steps should be aided by this report, particularly Steps 1, 2, and 3 (assessing the community, setting goals and objectives, and finding evidence). This chapter provided guidance and resources for continuing the process through the final four steps.

These general steps have been followed in countless localities to address myriad problems, including education, physical health, behavioral health, and crime and violence. There are numerous resources available to walk a group through the process. Prior RAND work states that there are seven additional considerations that can impact a community's ability to successfully adopt an evidence-based practice, including local buy-in, funding, credible sponsors, incentives, peer networks, marketing, and cultural alignment. This is very important considering the specific challenges in the Mississippi Delta, which is a unique setting and may require more adaptation, since many evidence-based programs have been delivered in more urban areas.

The main lesson from these studies and our experience is that a foundation or other funder cannot simply apply funds to a stand-alone program, even if it is evidence-based, and expect to produce long-term community-level changes in crime and violence. It requires a coordinated

effort that must rely heavily on community involvement to succeed. However, there is an opportunity for foundations to provide the support and expertise to empower a willing community to make changes that will improve quality of life for all residents, and ultimately, save lives.

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