
Project Safe Neighborhoods

An Evaluation of the City of Newburgh's Group Violence Intervention Model

By Jennifer A. Tallon

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Executive Summary

The City of Newburgh is located just north of New York City on the west bank of the Hudson River. Only 3.8 square miles in size, the city is characterized by high rates of gun violence and social troubles typically experienced by larger cities. The FBI's 2015 Uniform Crime Report placed the City of Newburgh among the top 50 most violent jurisdictions with a population of over 10,000 in the country (rank: #47) and the city has ranked among the most violent jurisdictions in upstate New York for several years.

Despite decreases in violent crime starting in 2013, the City of Newburgh Police Department has faced significant challenges in addressing the issue of gun-related violence. Prior federal investigations in Newburgh were followed by dramatic short-term declines in violence, but the violence increased once efforts ceased. Local law enforcement hypothesized that such upticks are the result of new criminals and emerging gangs vying for power in light of the vacuum created by massive enforcement actions.

In 2015, the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance awarded the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York funding through Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) to implement the focused deterrence strategy known as the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) model within the City of Newburgh. The ultimate goal of the program is to reduce violent and gun-related crime through a combination of law enforcement, community outreach, and social service assistance. The core approach of the GVI model involves engaging in consistent, direct communication with potential offenders, either via group call-in meetings or one-on-one custom notifications. These outreach opportunities enable law enforcement and community representatives to deliver a message of antiviolence to gang-involved individuals currently under legal supervision. The message generally includes an explanation of why law enforcement is targeting the specific individuals, the legal consequences the entire group will experience if violence continues (demonstrated by examples from past enforcement actions), and linkages to social services for those intent on making a change.

With funding from the PSN award, this study aims to explore the model's implementation and impacts in Newburgh—the smallest jurisdiction to have implemented the model to date. Study methods included a document review; interviews with members of the Newburgh GVI

task force; program observation; and an interrupted time series analysis examining the impact of the GVI program on violent crime, isolating violent offenses involving a firearm.

Program Planning & Implementation

GVI Task Force

The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) implemented the Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) initiative in 2014 to provide assistance in reducing firearms-related violence across New York. The Newburgh/Orange County GIVE Program (hereafter referred to as the GVI task force) has received funding since the start of the initiative and is a collaboration involving the police department, the Orange County Sheriff's Office, probation, and the district attorney's office. The task force began collaborating with the National Network for Safe Communities, a non-profit technical assistance provider, to plan and implement the GVI program in 2014. In Newburgh, the program was undertaken by a collaborative including three primary agencies:

- **City of Newburgh Police Department** Supported through the GIVE initiative, a crime analyst and field intelligence officer work together to provide up-to-date information on violent crime and gang-related activity. Special police units (anti-crime, narcotics, and homicide) work together to gather intelligence and execute enforcement actions—a coordinated law enforcement response to violence which focuses on an entire group rather than just the individual perpetrator. PSN funding also supports a special projects lieutenant, who serves as a law enforcement point of contact for the program. The special lieutenant's responsibilities include planning and coordinating enforcement actions, engaging in community outreach, collaborating with the GVI program manager to implement specific program elements, and working with technical assistance providers.
- **Orange County District Attorney's Office** The supervisor of the district attorney's violent felony unit serves as the prosecutor's principal point of contact, coordinating with the police department, probation, and the district attorney's office. The GVI program manager, funded through the GIVE initiative, is housed within the district attorney's office and is responsible for working with the point of contact to organize call-ins, deliver custom notifications, coordinate social services, provide regular follow-up to call-in attendees, and spearhead community engagement activities.

- **Orange County Office of Probation and Parole** The primary role of probation and parole is to help identify gang-involved individuals currently under supervision, who can be targeted for call-in meetings. One probation officer is funded through the GIVE initiative to coordinate intelligence with the police department.

Implementation

After approximately a year of planning, the first call-in meeting was held in October 2015. During the period covered by the current evaluation (October 2010 through May 2017), four call-ins were held, reaching a total of 33 attendees. An additional 36 individuals were reached through custom notifications. The social service agency assigned to the program, Catholic Charities of Orange County, assisted a total of 42 individuals.

Program Impacts

We conducted an interrupted time series analysis to test the impact of the GVI model on violence rates in Newburgh. This quasi-experimental design allows for the comparison of rates prior to and during implementation in the target city (Newburgh) and similar cities without the program in Orange County (Middletown) and adjacent Dutchess County (Poughkeepsie). Monthly trends in violent crimes (murder, aggravated assault, robbery) and monthly trends in violent crimes involving a firearm were measured using publicly available DCJS data derived from the FBI's Uniform Crime Report and the New York State Incident-Based Reporting Program. The study period includes the five years prior to GVI (October 2010-October 2015) compared to the first 19 months of program implementation (November 2015 -May 2017).¹

- **Impact on Violent Crime** During the implementation period, the rate of violent crime in Newburgh was significantly lower (17% lower) than rates seen over the previous five years and consistent with what was predicted based on historical trends (unlike other sites where observed rates were significantly higher than predicted rates). Analyses further revealed that the absolute change in violent crime in Newburgh was greater than the absolute changes in Middletown and Orange County.
- **Impact on Gun Violence** There was no significant difference in the average rate of gun violence in the pre-implementation and post-implementation periods in Newburgh.

¹ Although the first call-in meeting was held on 10/21/15, the start of implementation was rounded to November 2015 to ensure equal time intervals

Gun violence increased in Middletown and Orange County during the implementation period. In contrast, Poughkeepsie and Dutchess County experienced significant decreases in gun violence during the implementation period.

A Difference-in-Differences (DiD) analysis was used to determine whether the rate changes across implementation periods for Newburgh were significantly different from rate changes in each comparison location (including Orange County). The results of this analysis suggest that the absolute changes in rates of gun violence in Newburgh were not markedly different from changes in the comparison sites. Although GVI does not appear to have exerted as large of an impact on firearms-related violence in Newburgh, it is possible that the model is slowly attenuating gun violence, given increases seen elsewhere in the same county.

Overall, these findings suggest that the GVI model may be exerting an impact on violent crime in Newburgh. The impact on gun violence is unclear. One limitation of the current evaluation is that Newburgh's unique demographics and crime rate made it challenging to identify appropriate comparison sites. The results of the current study should be interpreted with caution. Future studies may benefit from looking at individual-level outcomes (e.g., access to services, recidivism) or community perceptions of safety to further clarify how the GVI model specifically impacts gun violence.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The overall crime rate in the U.S. is less than half of what it was at its peak in the early 1990s. This trend is marked by a good deal of local variation. Research has demonstrated that gun-related homicides vary significantly across subpopulations and by region (Wintemute 2015). Research further demonstrates that the majority of gun violence is perpetrated by a minority of individuals (Kennedy, Piehl, and Braga 1996).

Many local law enforcement agencies have turned to problem-oriented policing (Goldstein 1979) to address gun violence in their communities. This evidence-based approach involves establishing a clear definition of the problem, analyzing available data, implementing interventions, and assessing their efficacy. Problem-oriented policing can take many forms (e.g., hot spot policing, focused deterrence). A review of problem-oriented policing approaches found that such strategies yield reductions in crime and disorder overall (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2018).

Since 2001, the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance has provided approximately \$2 billion to law enforcement agencies through Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). The goal is to build upon promising problem-oriented policing practices and to address gun violence. Jurisdictions receiving PSN funding establish a multi-sector task force comprised of local, state, and federal law enforcement; service providers; community representatives; and researchers. Initial research indicates that cities fully implementing the core policy attributes of PSN (e.g., collaboration, research-integration, and enhanced federal prosecution) experienced significant, modest declines in violent crime compared to both cities implementing fewer policy attributes and those with no PSN intervention. These findings lend support for the use of a "multi-agency, focused deterrence, problem-solving approach" to address violent crime (McGarrell et al. 2010).

In 2015, the Bureau of Justice Assistance awarded PSN funding to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York to support implementation of the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) model in the City of Newburgh. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's 2015 Uniform Crime Report placed the City of Newburgh among the top 50 most violent places per capita in the country (#47) and the city has ranked among the most

violent jurisdictions in upstate New York for several years. Despite major strides in reducing both the overall crime rate and the homicide rate, the City of Newburgh Police Department reported that in 2014 there were increases in firearm-related violent crime (up 12%) and bullet-to-body shootings (up 17%), both of which were above their respective five-year averages.

The GVI model is a focused deterrence strategy—that is, deterrence-based intervention targeting specific criminal behaviors (e.g., gun violence) of a subset of chronic offenders. The ultimate goal of Newburgh’s GVI program is to reduce violent and gun-related crime. To assess program effectiveness, researchers at the Center for Court Innovation conducted an interrupted time series analysis. This approach compares violent crime rates in the intervention area to those in a similar comparison area in order to measure changes in trends before versus after the intervention—and to determine whether any observed changes are attributable to the intervention. Research staff also observed programming and conducted interviews with representatives of Newburgh’s GVI task force to better understand the program model, contextualize findings, and identify challenges and lessons learned from implementation. The current chapter provides an overview of the GVI model generally, along with a description of the local context in Newburgh. Chapter 2 describes the planning and implementation of the Newburgh GVI program. Chapter 3 presents the results of the impact evaluation, including an overview of the methodology employed. Chapter 4 concludes with a synthesis of study findings, highlighting recommendations and lessons learned based on the experiences of Newburgh.

The Group Violence Intervention Model

Formerly known as Operation Ceasefire, the GVI model was developed in Boston to address the issue of gun-involved violence and homicide among youth (Braga et al. 2001). The model has its roots in deterrence theory, which holds that crime can be prevented if individuals believe that the consequences of committing a criminal act outweigh any potential benefits (Gibbs 1975). Like many other deterrence models, GVI seeks to ensure that sanctions are certain, swift, and severe enough to decrease violent crime, but tailors the message to a specific audience of chronic offenders (Braga, Hureau, and Papachristos 2014). Also referred to as “pulling levers” policing, focused deterrence strategies such as GVI require law enforcement to identify offenders responsible for committing specific criminal acts (e.g., gun violence, gang violence) and to then exert all available legal pressures (e.g., coordinating with prosecutors to enhance charges for known affiliates with pending cases,

coordinating with probation to enhance supervision and violations for affiliates on probation or parole) when violence occurs. At the same time, social service assistance is offered to address underlying needs among those who comply with the message of nonviolence (Braga and Weisburd 2012a).

Braga and Weisburd (2015) described focused deterrence as “a blended strategy of law enforcement, community mobilization, and social service actions” (p. 56). The strategy has previously been applied to address the problems of gang violence and open-air drug markets with implementation following the same general steps with key components defined in Table 1.1:

1. Identify a specific crime problem within the community.
2. Convene a multisector working group including representatives from police, probation and parole, state and federal prosecutors, federal law enforcement, social services, and community representatives.
3. Conduct a data-driven analysis of the individuals and groups responsible for perpetrating the crime problem identified in Step 1 and the underlying dynamics which sustain the criminal activity.
4. Implement an **enforcement action** directed at the most violent individuals/groups identified in Step 3 and pull all available legal “levers” to implement sanctions. Concurrently, coordinate social services and community resources in order to offer assistance to offset the enforcement action.
5. Engage in consistent, direct communication with offenders of interest to let them know why they are the focus of enhanced law enforcement attention, the consequences associated with committing new violent acts, and how they can avoid these consequences. Such communication occurs through group **call-in meetings** and individual **custom notifications**.

Table 1.1. Key Components of the GVI Model

Component	Description
Enforcement Action	<u>Messenger:</u> Law enforcement members of the task force
	<u>Audience:</u> A target violent group (e.g., gang)
	<u>What:</u> Coordinated effort; use all legal options to incapacitate a target group
	<u>Purpose:</u> Illustrate consequences of future violence to other violent groups in the community
Call-in	<u>Messenger:</u> Law enforcement, service providers, community members
	<u>Audience:</u> Individuals involved with violent groups who are on probation or parole
	<u>What:</u> Public meeting; attendance mandated by probation/parole
	<u>Purpose:</u> Communicate message of non-violence; offer assistance; disseminate message of nonviolence via attendees
Custom Notification	<u>Messenger:</u> GVI program representatives
	<u>Audience:</u> Individuals involved with violent groups who are not under active probation/parole supervision
	<u>What:</u> A one-on-one meeting
	<u>Purpose:</u> Communicate message of non-violence; offer assistance; disseminate message of nonviolence via attendees

Note: These components represent the key communication points between the task force and group-involved individuals. For more details, see National Network for Safe Communities. 2013. *Group Violence Intervention: An Implementation Guide*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

One of the key components of the GVI model is the use of offender call-in meetings to directly deliver a message of antiviolence to offenders (National Network for Safe Communities 2013). The call-in meetings are a condition of probation and parole for target offenders currently under community supervision. Attendees are assured that they will not be arrested while attending the meetings, regardless of their current violation status. At the meeting, representatives from law enforcement let the group know that any future violence will be met with “swift and certain consequences” directed at all members of the group, regardless of their role in future incidents. This message from law enforcement is reinforced with testimony from community representatives who have been directly impacted by violence and outreach from social service providers. As described by the National Network for Safe Communities (2013), the goal of the call-in is to address the group-dynamics that facilitate violent behavior by:

- Establishing group accountability;
- Exerting pressure from within the group to stop the violence;
- Setting nonviolent community norms;
- Offering the opportunity for an “honorable exit” from the violent group; and
- Providing assistance (resources and social support) to group members looking to change.

The original Boston Ceasefire evaluation revealed a 63% reduction in the average number of monthly youth homicides, as well as declines in shootings reported and gun assaults following program implementation (Braga et al. 2001). Additionally, gangs exposed to the program experienced significantly fewer shootings—a 31% reduction—compared to unexposed gangs (Braga, Hureau, and Papachristos 2014). In a meta-analytic review of 11 quasi-experimental evaluations of focused deterrence strategies, Braga and Weisburd (2012b) observed a statistically significant, moderate crime reduction across a diverse array of cities. A meta-review of what works in reducing community violence similarly concludes that focused deterrence strategies exert the largest direct impact on violent crime (Abt and Winship 2016).

The City of Newburgh, New York

To date, GVI has been implemented in 33 cities nationwide (National Network for Safe Communities 2018). What makes Newburgh unique from other GVI sites is that, at 3.8 square miles, it is the smallest city to have implemented the model to date. Despite the small geographic size of the city, the crime rate resembles those in considerably larger urban areas (Radden Keefe 2011).

Located approximately 60 miles north of New York City on the west bank of the Hudson River in Orange County, the city was a former center of maritime trade. Following World War II, Newburgh experienced the same economic downturn felt throughout the Hudson Valley, as factory jobs disappeared and the completion of the New York State Thruway diverted traffic and commerce away from the city. The 1960s and 1970s were characterized by racial strife, corruption, and organized crime paired with a failed urban renewal plan that involved the demolition of nearly 1,300 buildings—primarily along the once-thriving waterfront. The crack epidemic of the 1980s fueled violence throughout the city; drug-related violence remains a problem today. The 2008 economic recession saw more than 600 foreclosures along with major city budget shortfalls, resulting in serious resource challenges for local law enforcement. The City of Newburgh Police Department, once staffed with over 100 officers, was down to 72 active officers in 2015 (Deibert 2015).

The gangs within Newburgh have historically been characterized as informally structured local groups (Radden Keefe 2011). However, around 2008, national gangs such as the Bloods and Latin Kings began to proliferate in the city and became the target of federal law enforcement. In May 2010, a 16-month federal investigation spearheaded by the Hudson Valley Safe Streets Task Force culminated in the first of three coordinated raids, resulting in

an estimated total of 100 indictments (Rivera 2010a; Rivera 2010b; Radden Keefe 2011). Unfortunately, the police department found that such responses resulted in only short-term crime reductions; the large volume of arrests created a disruption in Newburgh's criminal ecology, which ultimately caused the remaining criminals and/or gang members to vie for turf and power. As one task force representative described, crime dropped dramatically for a short period of time immediately following raids by law enforcement, then increased exponentially.

Today, Newburgh suffers from low employment, low homeownership rates, high rates of vacant/distressed properties, and escalating poverty levels. Based on 2010 Census data, more than a third (34%) of Newburgh residents live in poverty; likewise, 33% of families with children under 18 live in poverty. Newburgh's population is relatively young; nearly a third of residents are under the age of 18 (compared to 21% for New York State overall). The sizeable juvenile population coupled with the social and economic problems plaguing the city have created a large pool of criminally-involved youth. For example, a five-year analysis conducted by the local police department reveals that more than half (55%) of males arrested for assault for the first time were under 24 years of age (32% were 16-19; 23% were 20-24). The high rate of community violence combined with the city's young population suggested the need for a multipronged approach specifically targeting this population. Based on previous evidence supporting focused deterrence models, the City of Newburgh Police Department hoped that the GVI model had the potential to produce sustained violent crime reduction throughout Newburgh.

Chapter 2

Program Planning & Implementation

The program implementation period in the current study includes the period from November 2015 through May 2017.² This chapter describes the planning process (e.g., funding, partnerships, staffing) and implementation of specific components of the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) model (e.g., enforcement actions, call-in meetings, custom notifications) described in Chapter 1. Findings were informed by document review (e.g., grant applications, media scan), interviews with two police department representatives, a focus group with 14 members of the GVI task force, and observation of a call-in meeting. (See Appendix A for interview protocols; see Appendix B for the call-in meeting observation form). Further lessons learned and recommendations based on the planning and implementation processes are included in the discussion at the end of the report (Chapter 4).

Planning

Starting in 2004, the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) implemented Operation IMPACT to provide assistance to the 17 counties accounting for more than 80% of Part I index crimes outside of New York City.³ As representatives from the GVI task force described, Operation IMPACT primarily focused on addressing violent crime generally, rather than gun-related violence specifically. However, the program's emphasis upon field intelligence, crime analysis, and collaboration with other criminal justice partners was a significant cultural shift for the City of Newburgh Police Department and helped establish the groundwork for the future implementation of the GVI model.

Operation IMPACT was replaced by the Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) initiative in 2014. The revised initiative targets the same jurisdictions, with the goal of providing assistance in reducing firearm-related violence through crime analysis, evidence-based practices, and community partnerships. The Newburgh/Orange County GIVE Program (hereafter referred to as the GVI task force), a collaboration between the police, the Orange

² Although the first call-in meeting was held on 10/21/15, the start of implementation was rounded to November 2015 to ensure equal time intervals.

³ Part 1 index crimes include murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

County Sheriff's Office, Orange County Probation, and the Orange County District Attorney's Office, has been consistently funded since 2014. The funding has been used to promote intelligence-based policing by supporting personnel (crime analyst, field intelligence officer, detective, overtime for foot patrols of hotspot target areas, GVI program manager), as well as funding community improvement programming (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and youth programming (Youth Police Initiative).

The GIVE initiative also provides law enforcement agencies access to technical assistance to support chosen evidence-based strategies. In September 2014, the task force began collaborating with David Kennedy and colleagues at the National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC) to implement the GVI model. Although GVI task force members recall initial reluctance on the part of law enforcement, the two-day Ceasefire training conducted by NNSC was key to helping law enforcement stakeholders understand the value and challenges associated with the model:

It was just like reviewing a reel in my head of my entire career of our standard response to violent episodes in a specific area of the community: Let's flood the area [where violence occurred]. Toss everybody, everybody gets on a wall, everybody gets issued, cited. The people that are committing the acts of violence, they know to get the hell off the street. The only people that are getting caught up with it—in the enforcement—were the people that we want on our side or the people that weren't really involved. With this very focused and intelligence-based initiative, it allows us to speak very freely with the community members that aren't involved and let them know, 'We understand what's going on here. I'm here for you, not against you. We know they're doing it. Try to stay out of our way, we're going after them!' That's one of the things that's helped us rebuild our relationship [with the community], that type of engagement.

After the initial training, the GVI task force spent a year working with NNSC to analyze violence trends in the city. What sets the City of Newburgh apart from other GVI sites is that it is the smallest law enforcement agency to implement the model to date. Members of the GVI task force described initial concern that the model may not be appropriate in a city the size of Newburgh, but NNSC was able to demonstrate that a large amount of the local violence was caused by a small number of individuals. These early audit exercises also allowed law enforcement to identify the most violent groups that would be the focus of future enforcement actions.

In examining the structure of Newburgh’s violent groups, the audits revealed that most were local, homegrown gangs lacking the organization observed during the previous federal law enforcement investigation into the Latin Kings and Bloods described in Chapter 1. Although these local groups often claimed affiliation with larger national gangs, law enforcement noted that the dynamics are constantly in flux, with affiliations and rivalries primarily determined by geographic boundaries. Law enforcement described a need to closely monitor social media to track changing dynamics and feuds. In addition, law enforcement reported relying on other agencies (probation, district attorney’s office) and the community to provide up-to-date information.

GVI Partners and Personnel

The GVI model relies upon collaboration between local and federal law enforcement agencies to execute enforcement actions, organize call-in meetings and custom notifications, coordinate social services, and prosecute violent offenders (see Table 1.1 in Chapter 1). The Newburgh project is staffed by:

- A GVI program manager (employed by the district attorney’s office);
- A crime analyst;
- A field intelligence officer;
- A special projects police lieutenant, who serves as the GVI law enforcement point of contact; and
- A dedicated probation representative.

These individuals work to coordinate information across the primary agencies and implement program activities. Program staff works closely with others at the key collaborating agencies involved in the daily operations of the program.

City of Newburgh Police Department The Newburgh GVI model relies upon the coordination of the department’s anti-crime, narcotics, and homicide units to gather intelligence and execute enforcement actions. During 2015, the department underwent a restructuring, dedicating a sergeant to the anti-crime unit to facilitate information sharing among the units. Although this restructuring proved challenging (it left one of the nine patrol squads without a sergeant), task force members expressed that it had largely improved operations.

Within investigations [i.e., anti-crime, narcotics, and homicide], we have three sergeants now handling ... things that at one point was only handled by one

sergeant. So that creates more communication within the department, with the district attorney's office, with probation, with everyone around.

The funding awarded under PSN in 2015 allowed the department to fund a special projects lieutenant to serve as the GVI law enforcement point of contact. This point of contact is responsible for planning and coordinating enforcement actions, community outreach, and implementing specific elements of the GVI model. Examples of responsibilities include assisting with call-in preparations (e.g., working with probation and parole to identify call-in attendees, coordinating the security plan for the call-in) and implementation (e.g., speaking at call-ins); working with the GVI program manager to implement custom notifications (e.g., identifying impact players to target, training law enforcement staff); and attending community meetings and other events with the program manager. The lieutenant also participates in weekly technical assistance calls with the program manager and NNSC.

Orange County District Attorney's Office The supervisor of the Orange County District Attorney's Violent Felony Unit serves as the prosecutor's point of contact for law enforcement. Probation and the police department provide updates about upcoming cases and/or violations involving known group-involved individuals targeted as part of an enforcement action or who have violated the message of the call-in. In turn, the prosecutor's point of contact shares this information with the assigned assistant district attorney to inform bail and charging decisions.

The GVI program manager position funded through the GIVE initiative is housed within the district attorney's office. The program manager is responsible for working with the law enforcement point of contact to organize call-ins and deliver custom notifications. Additionally, the manager works with Catholic Charities of Orange County to coordinate social services for call-in participants and their families. The program manager provides regular follow-up with call-in attendees and those receiving custom notifications to help link them to services, navigate systems, and reiterate the message non-violence. Finally, the manager convenes quarterly community meetings to explore additional partnerships, provide information on the GVI program, and solicit feedback from community members.

Orange County Office of Probation and Parole The primary role of probation and parole in the GVI model is to help identify group-involved individuals currently under supervision and refer them to call-in meetings. This collaborative process involves identifying which individuals are at the greatest risk of violence based on their histories and group affiliations. One probation officer is funded through the GIVE initiative to coordinate

intelligence with the police department related to group-involved probationers and parolees. For example, probation and police may collaboratively conduct home visits for group-involved individuals following a shooting incident or work outside. The probation representative frequently works nontraditional hours to make contacts during periods of the day where violence is most likely to occur.

Implementation

In October 2015, the GVI model was fully implemented in Newburgh with the first enforcement action and call-in meeting. During the period covered by the current evaluation (October 2010 through May 2017), four call-ins were held, reaching a total of 33 attendees. An additional 36 individuals were reached through custom notifications. The social service agency assigned to the program assisted a total of 42 individuals.

Enforcement Actions

Approximately one month prior to each call-in, a group is targeted for an enforcement action to illustrate to call-in attendees that continued violence will not be tolerated and law enforcement will hold the entire group accountable for the actions of individual members.⁴ Using data from the group audits held during the planning phase, crime mapping, and field intelligence, the GVI task force selects the most violent group and builds state or federal cases against all known members. In response to a violent incident, law enforcement will then pull all available legal levers to arrest group members and share these details at the subsequent call-in. Enforcement actions are coordinated law enforcement actions. In Newburgh, this coordination includes City of Newburgh police officers/detectives, along with representatives from the Orange County District Attorney's Office; U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York; Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (DEA); and local departments of probation and parole.

Although the first two enforcement actions were considered successful, members of the GVI task force described that they may not have had the desired impact of displaying the coordinated resources devoted to combating violence. As one task force member described,

⁴ The enforcement action conducted prior to the first call-in is known as the demonstration enforcement act. The purpose is to establish the groundwork for the message of non-violence that will be delivered at the first call-in to illustrate which violent acts will result in coordinated legal action (e.g., gun related homicides).

actions were immediately followed by several days without violence, but the target groups quickly adjusted and returned to previous levels of violence. The task force described the third enforcement action as a much larger display of resources involving helicopters, SWAT teams, and armored vehicles, which they believed would make the message more salient.

Call-in Meetings

As described in Chapter 1, a call-in meeting involves representatives from law enforcement, social services, and the community coming together to deliver the message that violence will no longer be tolerated and an offer of assistance for those wishing to change. Attendees are known group-involved individuals currently under community supervision; their participation in the meeting is a requirement of their reporting. Table 2.1 outlines the speakers and messages shared during the meeting.

Table 2.1. Call-in Speakers

Voice Of:	Purpose	Served By
Law Enforcement	Explain that violent acts will result in swift and certain punishment	Police, local district attorneys, federal prosecutors
Social Services	Offer service linkages (e.g., education, employment, mental health) for attendees interested in pursuing a new path	Community-based provider
Redemption	Act as a living example that attendees can overcome violence	Community member previously involved in local violence
Pain	Act as an example of the toll violence takes on individuals and families	Community member who has lost a child to violence
Morality	Describe how violence impacts the community and the potential for change	Community leaders (e.g., clergy)

Members of the research team were invited to observe the call-in meeting held after the third enforcement action, in June 2016. What follows is a description of the timeline, venue, and speakers for that event.

Timeline & Attendees As described above, the GVI program manager and special projects lieutenant work in tandem to organize call-in meetings. Technical assistance providers from NNSC attend each call-in and hold a debriefing session afterward.

Although the call-in meeting itself is one hour long, additional events the day of the meeting are essential to ensuring a safe and successful meeting. The observed call-in took place over a four-hour period:

- **4:00 pm:** Police conducted a security walk-through of the venue and held a briefing.
- **5:00 pm:** Representatives from law enforcement (City of Newburgh Police Department, Orange County Probation and Parole, Orange County Sheriff's Office, Orange County District Attorney's Office, U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York) and the community (Catholic Charities, Exodus Transitional Community, Ebenezer Baptist Church, community members) arrived at the venue.
- **5:30 pm:** Call-in attendees (ten men, one woman) arrived and were checked in by three police officers. Cell phones were checked in to minimize distractions.
- **6:00 pm:** Call-in commenced.
- **7:00 pm:** Call-in concluded. Attendees were invited to stay for a catered dinner with all representatives.
- **8:00 pm:** Event concluded.

Venue The Newburgh campus of the State University of New York's Orange County Community College served as the venue for the observed call-in meeting. The site was selected for its accessibility and neutrality. After meeting with two police officers and campus security at the entrance, call-in attendees were directed to a classroom on the second floor for a more thorough security check. Representatives from probation and parole waited with attendees to facilitate engagement. The chief of police met with attendees, shook their hands, and re-assured them that they would not be arrested at the meeting, but would be asked to listen to a presentation. A community representative—serving as a living example that attendees can overcome violence—spoke with attendees and provided his contact information.

Attendees were ushered downstairs into a large lecture hall for the presentation. The lecture hall was a welcoming environment which offered ample space (approximately 60 seats including an area for communal dining) and views of the Hudson River. Paper was taped over the glass doors and windows facing the hallway to maintain privacy and minimize disruptions. Two front rows of chairs were reserved for call-in attendees to ensure that participants could focus on the presentation; guests were seated in the back of the room and included the research team, family and friends of attendees, and additional staff.

Speakers Prior to attendees entering the room, the GVI program manager, serving as moderator, established rules for guests: silence phones; quietly leave the room if necessary (no re-entry is allowed); and stand up when attendees enter the room as a sign of support. Once attendees entered, the program manager provided a brief program overview,

emphasizing that the community needs the attendees “safe, alive, and out of prison.” Attendees were advised, “This is not a negotiation. The violence must end.”

Law enforcement representatives included the police chief and prosecutors from both the Orange County District Attorney’s Office and the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York. These initial presentations highlighted the resources available to law enforcement and the collaborative efforts agencies would draw upon to prosecute further violence. Presenters underscored the central message of the call-in: “You or anyone in your group commits a murder, we’re coming down on the whole group.” Attendees were informed that they had been targeted because they were felt to be the “most likely to kill someone else or be killed. . . we need you here in the community” and were asked to consider whether it was worth the risk to continue association with their group. Prior enforcement actions served as illustration of what could happen to groups continuing to engage in violence. Prosecutors described likely sentencing scenarios for federal cases (e.g., no opportunity for parole, violent federal prison facilities). Attendees were further urged to take advantage of the services they were being offered.

A representative from Catholic Charities of Orange County acknowledged that many attendees had previously experienced broken promises and offered his direct phone number with a promise to be available day or night. “We want you alive. We want you safe. The choice is yours . . . We won’t promise you something that we can’t give.”

As the call-in transitioned to speakers from the community, a representative from Exodus Transitional Community reinforced the message of assistance and served as a voice of redemption. He described his 30 years in detention and his current role in finding employment for those who leave the violent lifestyle. Like the previous speaker, he offered a direct telephone number and a promise to be available to attendees. Another community member served as the voice of pain, describing how her son died as a result of a gang-related shooting. She expressed that she wished that her son had been given the type of opportunity that attendees were being offered. Finally, the pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church addressed the group as the moral voice, making a direct appeal to stop the violence: “We are begging you. We are pleading. If you have a gun we are begging you to put it down. If you are with someone with a gun, we are begging them to put it down.”

The presentation was concluded by the GVI program manager, who instructed attendees that she would be in contact with them if they did not directly contact her. She repeated the offer of help, the importance of community, and asked attendees to consider if they were ready to

change. Before adjourning the group to a communal meal, the pastor led the group in prayer, with attendees and speakers joining hands in a circle. Attendees could either leave after the presentation or join the meal.

All 11 invitees attended the observed call-in, stayed for the duration, and most appeared to stay for the communal meal. Speakers were respectful and consistent in their presentations with evidence from previous enforcement actions used to stress the seriousness of the situation. The majority of invitees appeared attentive throughout the presentations, appearing most engaged during the presentations from the community representatives.

Custom Notifications

All call-in attendees are under community supervision; probation and parole can therefore apply legal leverage to require call-in attendance. However, the GVI program manager and police occasionally have need to speak with those who have not yet been mandated to attend a call-in (e.g., individuals not arrested as part of an enforcement action, rival gang members involved in an active feud). Such individualized outreach serves as a custom abbreviated call-in at targets' homes, with law enforcement delivering the message that violence will no longer be tolerated and describing enforcement actions. The GVI program manager further describes the services available to targets, provides contact information, and follows up with them at a later date.

Chapter 3

Program Impact

We conducted an interrupted time series analysis to test the impact of the GVI program on violence in Newburgh. This quasi-experimental design allows for the comparison of rates prior to and during implementation in the target city (Newburgh), similar cities without the program (Middletown and Poughkeepsie, New York), and at the county level (Orange and Dutchess County, New York). The inclusion of comparison sites controls for threats to internal validity while the inclusion of county data provides insight into any displacement of violence that could potentially result from program implementation. The time frame for the study includes the five years prior to GVI implementation (October 2010 through October 2015) compared to the 19-month period following program implementation (November 2015 through May 2017).⁵

Methodology

Comparison Cities

Although prior evaluations of GVI typically compare specific areas *within* a single city (e.g., a precinct with the program compared to neighboring precincts without the program), such an approach would not work in Newburgh, where the program is a citywide initiative. Any site selected to serve as a comparison to Newburgh should be demographically similar, have similar baseline crime rates, and not have implemented GVI or another violence prevention program. Ideally, the comparison site would also be located within Orange County, to allow for a test of crime displacement (i.e., crime being pushed to locations just beyond the program reach due to the intervention) and to control for additional factors that could impact results (e.g., county-level prosecutorial policies). However, as described in Chapter 1, the demographics and crime associated with Newburgh are unique in the county and presented challenges in terms of selecting an appropriate comparison city.

Review of census data and consultation with members of Newburgh's GVI task force informed the selection of nearby Middletown and Poughkeepsie as comparison sites.

⁵ Although the first call-in meeting was held on 10/21/15, the start of implementation was rounded to November 2015 to ensure equal time intervals.

Demographic and violent crime data by site are presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. Middletown is located in the same county as Newburgh, but crime is vastly different in the two cities. Middletown reflects approximately 17% of all incidences of violent crimes within Orange County compared to the 52% associated with Newburgh. Crime rates in Poughkeepsie (located in adjacent Dutchess County) are more similar to those Newburgh. Demographics across the three sites varied. The Newburgh and Middletown populations are characterized by larger Hispanic populations than Poughkeepsie; Newburgh has the smallest percentage of white residents. Residents of Newburgh are slightly younger than those in the other two sites; the median household incomes in Newburgh and Poughkeepsie are substantially lower than that in Middletown; likewise, families in Newburgh and Poughkeepsie are more likely to fall below the poverty line than those in Middletown.

Table 3.1. Demographics by City, County, and State

	Orange County			Dutchess County	
	Newburgh	Middletown	Countywide	Poughkeepsie	Countywide
Land Area (sq. mi.)	3.80	5.08	811.69	5.14	795.63
2010 Population	28,866	28,086	372,782	30,900	297,448
2015 Population Estimate	28,290	27,812	377,647	30,371	295,754
Race/Ethnicity					
Hispanic	48%	40%	18%	20%	11%
White	20%	37%	68%	44%	75%
Black	28%	18%	9%	32%	9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1%	2%	2%	2%	4%
2 or More Races	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%
Age					
Median Age	28.2	33.7	36.6	32.4	40.2
% Persons Under 18	31%	27%	27%	22%	22%
Income					
Median Household Income	\$34,348	\$50,441	\$70,848	\$38,919	\$71,904
% Persons in Poverty	34.2%	19.6%	12.1%	24.1%	10.4%

Note: The five years prior to implementation spanned October 2010–October 2015 and the implementation period was November 2015–May 2017. Since implementation occurred in between two census periods, the 2015 version of the 2010 population estimates base was used to calculate the pre-implementation rates and the population estimates for 2015 were used to calculate the implementation rates. Demographic information presented in this table comes from the 2010 census data.

Table 3.2. Incidents by Region and Implementation Period

	Newburgh		Middletown		Poughkeepsie	
	# of Incidents	% of County	# of Incidents	% of County	# of Incidents	% of County
Index Crimes	2,885	52%	943	17%	1,710	48%
Pre-GVI	2,300	52%	740	17%	1,401	49%
During GVI	585	49%	203	17%	309	45%
Index Crimes Involving Firearms	763	68%	145	13%	391	64%
Pre-GVI	588	70%	99	12%	334	65%
During GVI	175	64%	46	17%	57	58%
Shooting Incidents Involving Injury ²	241	100%	14	100%	113	100%
Pre-GVI	181	no data	10	no data	90	no data
During GVI	60	available	4	available	23	available

¹ Newburgh and Middletown percentages represent incidents within Orange County. Poughkeepsie percentages represent incidents within Dutchess County.

² Shootings incidents involving firearms are not recorded at the county level.

Background research in Middletown and Poughkeepsie confirmed that neither site had implemented GVI and identified external events that could pose a threat to validity during the study period. The three sites all received funding through the Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) initiative funded by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). As discussed in Chapter 2, Newburgh primarily used GIVE funding to implement the GVI program, but also used funding for supplemental activities (e.g., personnel, hot spot policing, youth programming). In contrast, Middletown and Poughkeepsie used funds solely to implement other strategies available through the initiative (e.g., crime analyst position, hot spot policing). In 2016, Newburgh was selected to become an implementation site for SNUG, a DCJS-funded violence prevention initiative based on the CURE Violence model. The SNUG program was still in the planning phase during the period covered by the current study.

Measures

Monthly trends in violence (murder, aggravated assault, robbery) were measured using publicly available DCJS data presented in the GIVE Greenbook or Operation IMPACT (the precursor to GIVE) reports.⁶ Derived from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Report and the New York State Incident-Based Reporting Program, the Greenbook also presents the number of violent crimes involving firearms and the number of shooting incidents reported by each

⁶ Data is available at <http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/crimnet/ojsa/greenbook.html>.

participating law enforcement agency. At the county level, data was provided by DCJS, which does not track shooting incidents at the county level. Due to the lack of county-level context and given significant variability across the three sites, shooting incidents were excluded from the analysis.

Analytical Procedures

We conducted interrupted time series to analyze incident data related to both any violent crimes and those specifically involving firearms. Monthly violent crime counts provided by DCJS were combined with census data to calculate monthly rates per 1,000 people, enabling cross-site comparisons. Because the study spanned two census reporting periods, 2010 population data was used to calculate rates for the five year pre-GVI sample (October 2010 through October 2015, 61 months). Population estimates from the 2015 American Community Survey were used to calculate monthly rates for the 19-month implementation period (November 2015 through May 2017).

We conducted analysis consisting of monthly trend charts, ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, and independent samples t-tests. First, monthly charts allowed us to identify linear trends in crime rates for each city during the five years prior to the program and a year and a half into implementation. Second, we used OLS regressions to examine whether a statistically significant trend was present in the pre-implementation data. If a trend was statistically significant, we applied an equation to calculate the predicted monthly rates for the implementation period.⁷ We next used paired comparisons to test whether actual rates observed during program implementation were significantly different from those predicted for the same time period based on the previous five years. Third, we conducted independent t-tests to examine how the average crime rate changed in each city prior to and during program implementation.

Finally, we carried out a difference-in-differences (DiD) analysis to determine whether the rate changes across implementation periods for Newburgh were significantly different from rate changes in each comparison location (including Orange County). To this end, we

⁷ This data was then input into the formula $Y = a + Bx + e$: where Y is the crime rate, a is the expected value of Y when all of the independent variables are equal to 0, B is the regression coefficient for the independent variable, x is the independent variable (month numbers used were 61-79 for the implementation period) and e is the error term. The formula represents the linear trend in the crime rate.

implemented OLS regression to predict crime rates in sub-samples (i.e., Newburgh and Middletown only), based on location (coded Newburgh = 1, Comparisons = 0), time period (coded Pre-Implementation = 0, Implementation = 1), and the interaction term. If the interaction term approached statistical significance, factorial Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the marginal means and determine where the upward or downward trends were present. Results from all analyses are presented below for violent crimes and violent crimes involving firearms.

Impact on Violent Crime

The first goal of the impact analysis was to determine whether GVI reduced violent crime in Newburgh. Table 3.3 presents the percentage change in violent crime rates by site over the study period. The violent crime rate in Newburgh decreased 17% during program implementation. However, the violent crime rates decreased across all sites, including a notable 28% drop in Poughkeepsie.

Table 3.3. Change in Violent Crime Rates, Pre- and During GVI Implementation

	Orange County			Dutchess County	
	Newburgh	Middletown	Countywide	Poughkeepsie	Countywide
Rate of Index Crimes (incidents per 1,000 people)					
Pre-Program	1.306	0.432	0.193	0.743	0.157
During Program	1.088*	0.384	0.165**	0.535***	0.122
Absolute Change	-0.218	-0.048	-0.028	-0.208	-0.035
Percent Change	-17%	-11%	-15%	-28%	-22%

+p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the monthly trends in violent crime rates for Newburgh compared to Middletown and Poughkeepsie. The solid lines illustrate monthly fluctuations in crime rates across the two time periods; the dotted lines illustrate the general downward trend across all sites presented in Table 3.3. This figure also illustrates what was noted earlier with regard to the selection of comparison cities: Newburgh has a higher crime rate than the comparison sites, despite geographic proximity and similar population sizes.

Given the general finding that violent crime rates decreased over time in all sites, Table 3.3 also presents the results of independent t-tests, used to determine whether pre-implementation monthly crime rates significantly differed from the post-implementation monthly crime rates in each site. In examining the effects across Orange County, there were significant decreases in the average monthly violent crime rate during the implementation

Figure 3.1.
Trends in Monthly Violent Crime Rates, Newburgh vs. Comparison Cities

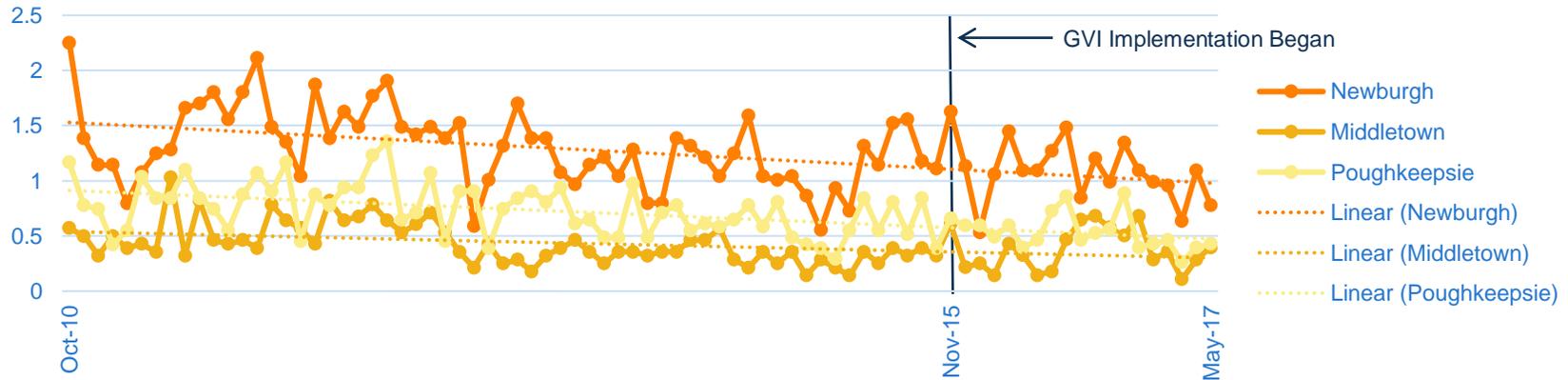


Table 3.4 Pre-Implementation Violent Crime Rates OLS Regression

	Orange County									Dutchess County					
	Newburgh			Middletown			Countywide			Poughkeepsie			Countywide		
N	61			61			61			61			61		
Adjusted R ²	0.169			0.264			0.170			0.176			0.162		
F	13.196***			22.471***			13.266***			13.781***			12.570***		
Variable	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Constant	1.560	0.081		0.594	0.040		0.222	0.009		0.917	0.054		0.182	0.008	
Independent Variable ¹	-0.008	0.002	-0.428***	-0.005	0.001	-0.525***	-0.001	0.000	-0.428***	-0.006	0.002	-.435***	-0.001	0.000	-0.419***

+p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

¹The independent variable is a continuous variable representing the 61-month pre-intervention period between October 2010-October 2015.

period for Newburgh and Orange County, but no significant difference in Middletown. Prior to implementation, the average violent crime rate in Newburgh was 1.306 crimes per 1,000 residents compared to an average of 1.088 per 1,000 residents during program implementation. The significant decreases in Orange County overall are consistent with those observed in Newburgh, as that city accounted for more than half (52%) of all violent crime in the county during the study period (see Table 3.3). Accordingly, Newburgh exerts a disproportionate effect on the county level crime rate compared to Middletown, where rates remain steady. Similarly, the monthly crime rate in Poughkeepsie significantly declined during the implementation period; these findings were mirrored at the county level, as the city accounted for nearly half (48%) of the violent crime in Dutchess County.

The results in Tables 3.3 illustrate that violent crime decreased during the study period; the declines were statistically significant in all sites but Middletown. To determine whether the violent crime rates observed during the implementation period were lower than what would be predicted based on the trends of the preceding five years, we implemented a series of OLS regressions.

As depicted in Table 3.4 (previous page), the violent crime rates were significantly decreasing in each region prior to implementation of GVI. The decline in Newburgh ($\beta = -0.428$) continues to be reflected in the overall decline across Orange County ($\beta = -0.428$). There was a sharper decline in pre-implementation crime rates in Middletown ($\beta = -0.525$); this may be attributable to lower crime rates and less fluctuation in that site. Findings in Poughkeepsie and Dutchess County also point to a significant decline in violent crime during the five-year pre-implementation period.

Given that the pre-implementation violent crime rates were already significantly declining across sites, the next step was to calculate *predicted* crime rates for the implementation period (Months 61-79) using OLS regression. Paired comparison t-tests were then used to determine whether differences in the *actual* crime rates during the implementation period were significantly different than the *predicted* rates for the same period. Results are presented in Table 3.5 Crime rates continued to decrease across the sites, with declines in Newburgh and Poughkeepsie generally continuing the trend anticipated by the previous decrease in violent crime. In contrast, the declines in Middletown, Orange County, and Dutchess County were higher than predicted based on the previous five years of data.

Table 3.5 Paired Comparisons of Actual Vs. Predicted Rates of Violent Crimes During Implementation of GVI

	Actual Rate	Predicted Rate
<i>N</i>	19	19
Orange County	0.165*	0.152
Newburgh	1.088	1.000
Middletown	0.384**	0.244
Dutchess County	0.122**	0.112
Poughkeepsie	0.535	0.497

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

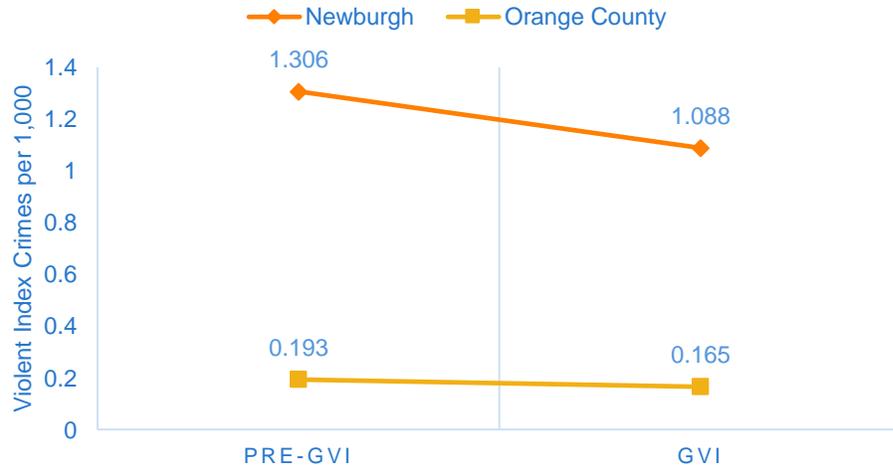
Note: Implementation spanned November 2015 - May 2017.

In light of the finding that violent crime decreased within Newburgh and the comparison sites during the study (even if less than anticipated, given the rate of decline in the previous five years in some sites), we conducted a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) analysis to compare trends in Newburgh to those in other sites. Although each model predicting violent crime rate was significant (see Appendix C for model summaries), the presence of a significant interaction coefficient signifies differences between Newburgh and the comparison site across the two points in implementation. There was a marginally significant difference ($p = .09$) for the comparison between Newburgh and Middletown, indicating that the absolute change in violence seen in Newburgh (-0.218) was notably greater than the absolute decline seen in Middletown (-0.048). Figure 3.2 presents the means from Table 3.3. Additionally, the absolute change in Newburgh was statistically greater ($p < .05$) than the decline seen across all of Orange County (-0.028). Figure 3.3 presents the Newburgh/Orange County DiD results. The DiD results for Newburgh compared to Poughkeepsie did not reach statistical significance, suggesting that the absolute change between those sites (-0.218 v. -0.208) was not statistically different.

Figure 3.2. Comparison of Violent Index Crime Trends in Newburgh and Middletown, Prior to and During GVI



Figure 3.3. Comparison of Violent Index Crime Trends in Newburgh and Orange County, Prior to and During GVI



Impact on Gun Violence

Since the GVI model specifically targets gun-related violence, separate analyses examine whether the program impacted the rate of violent crimes *involving firearms*. As displayed in Table 3.6, there was more variability across the regions in gun violence rates compared to the earlier analysis involving violent crime. Orange County experienced a 3% *increase* in firearms related violence over the study period, but the rate *decreased* by 2% in Newburgh. The 50% increase in gun violence shown in Middletown should be interpreted with caution; the extremely low rate of gun violence overall in that site means that one or two new incidents may inflate the percent change (see the low *absolute change*). Dutchess County and Poughkeepsie experienced the largest decreases in firearms violence during the study period.

Table 3.6 Percent Change in Gun Violence Rates Prior to and During GVI Implementation

	Orange County			Dutchess County	
	Newburgh	Middletown	Countywide	Poughkeepsie	Countywide
Rate of Index Crimes Involving Firearms (incidents per 1,000 people)					
Pre-Program	0.334	0.058	0.037	0.177	0.028
During Program	0.326	0.087*	0.038	0.099***	0.018***
Absolute Change	-0.008	0.029	0.001	-0.078	-0.010
Percent Change	-2%	50%	3%	-44%	-36%

+p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001.

Table 3.6 also presents the results of independent t-tests used to determine whether pre-implementation monthly gun violence rates significantly differed from the post-implementation monthly gun violence rates in each site. Newburgh experienced an average of .334 violent crimes involving firearms per 1,000 residents prior to implementation of GVI and an average of 0.326 violent crimes involving firearms per 1,000 residents during implementation. This difference is not significant. There was no significant difference within Orange County during the study period, but Middletown saw a statistically significant increase in gun violence: 0.058 violent crimes involving a firearm per 1,000 residents prior to implementation compared to 0.087 per 1,000 residents during implementation. Caution must once again be exercised in interpreting findings related to firearms violence within Middletown due to the low rates. Poughkeepsie and Dutchess County experienced statistically significant decreases in firearms violence during the study period.

As displayed by the dotted line in Figure 3.4, the linear trend of Newburgh and Middletown appear relatively level, but Poughkeepsie demonstrates a decrease in gun violence over the study period. Table 3.7 presents the results of the OLS regressions testing whether these trends were statistically significant during the five years prior to the program. As expected based on Figure 3.4, there was no significant trend in Newburgh's monthly rates prior to implementation. This may be partially attributable to large fluctuations in gun violence across the entire study period. Middletown experienced a statistically significant linear decrease ($\beta = -0.316$) in gun violence over the pre-implementation period; Poughkeepsie experienced a nearly-significant decline ($\beta = -0.220, p = .09$).

As Middletown and Poughkeepsie were the only two sites to display significant (or nearly-significant) declines during the five years prior to program implementation, predicted rates were calculated only for these sites. Table 3.8 displays the findings from this analysis. In Middletown, the observed rates of gun violence during the implementation period were significantly higher than expected based on the five previous years (0.087 v. 0.019 violent crimes involving firearms per 1,000 residents, $p < .001$). In contrast, the observed rates in Poughkeepsie (0.099 v. 0.145 violent crimes involving firearms per 1,000 residents, $p < .001$) were lower than predicted based on the prior data.

Finally, the research team conducted an additional DiD analysis to determine if there were any differences in the rate of change overtime for Newburgh as compared to the other sites. Appendix C contains the model summaries for the OLS regressions. Unlike the previous analysis of all violent crime, there were no significant differences between Newburgh and the other regions in terms of changes in gun violence.

Figure 3.4
Trends in Monthly Gun Violence Rates, Newburgh vs. Comparison Cities

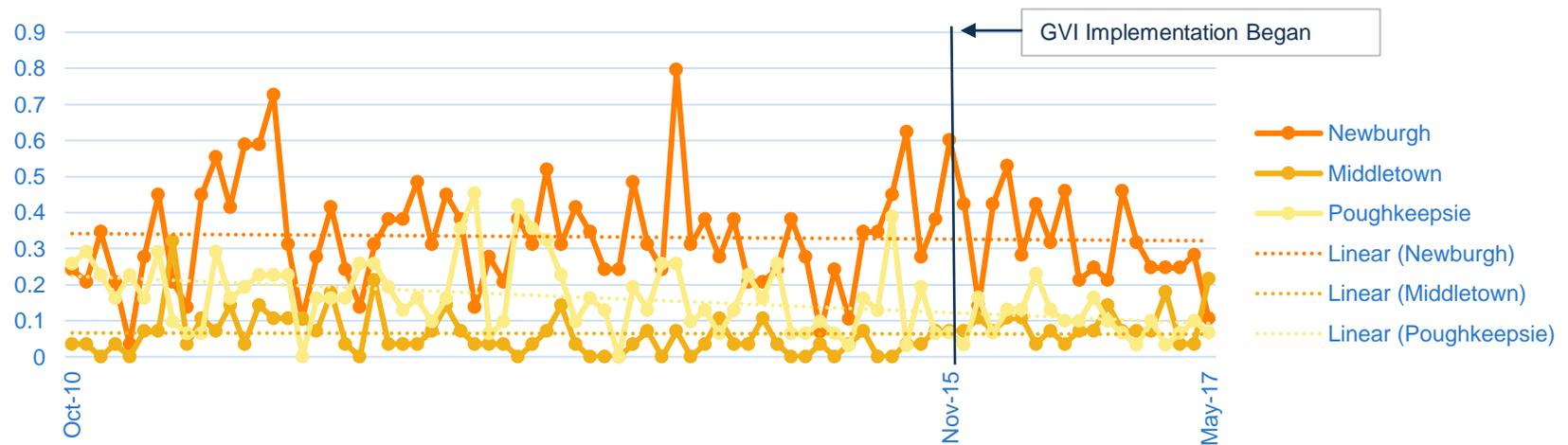


Table 3.7 Pre-Implementation Rate of Gun Violence OLS Regression

	Orange County									Dutchess County					
	Newburgh			Middletown			Countywide			Poughkeepsie			Countywide		
N	61			61			61			61			61		
Adjusted R ²	-0.017			0.084			-0.012			0.032			0.007		
F	0.006			6.534**			0.294			3.000+			1.411		
Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Constant	0.331	0.038		0.089	0.014		0.039	0.004		0.215	0.025		0.031	0.003	
Independent Variable ¹	0.000	0.001	0.010	-0.001	0.000	-0.316**	0.000	0.000	-0.070	-0.001	0.001	-0.220+	0.000	0.000	-0.153

+p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

¹The independent variable is a continuous variable representing the 61-month pre-intervention period between October 2010-October 2015.

Table 3.8 Paired Comparisons of Actual vs. Predicted Rates of Gun Violence During GVI Implementation

		Actual Rate	Predicted Rate
	<i>N</i>	19	19
Orange County		-	-
Newburgh		-	-
Middletown		0.087***	0.019
Dutchess County		-	-
Poughkeepsie		0.099***	0.145

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Note: Implementation spanned November 2015-May 2017.

Summary of Impact Findings

In the five years prior to GVI, the violent crime rate was steadily decreasing in Newburgh and the comparison areas. During the implementation period, the rate of violent crime in Newburgh was significantly lower than rates seen over the previous five years and consistent with what was predicted based on historical trends (unlike other sites where observed rates were significantly higher than predicted rates). Analyses further revealed that the absolute change in violent crime in Newburgh was greater than the absolute changes in Middletown ($p < .10$) and Orange County ($p < .05$). As previously discussed, violent crime rates are influenced by a multitude of factors beyond individual strategies (e.g., socioeconomic factors, policy changes). Although the current study does not establish that GVI *caused* a decrease in violent crime, these findings suggest that the program may have exerted an impact in Newburgh.

Regarding the impact of GVI on gun violence, findings are mixed. The great variability in gun violence during the five years prior to GVI yielded no linear trend which meant that predicted rates for the implementation period could not be calculated. Although there was a 2% decrease in gun violence in Newburgh during the implementation period compared to the previous five years, this difference was not significant. However, these non-significant findings may be viewed as a positive when compared to gun violence within the county as gun violence *increased* in Middletown and Orange County during the implementation period. In contrast, Poughkeepsie and Dutchess County experienced significant decreases in gun violence during the implementation period. At first glance, this suggests that GVI may not be

reducing gun violence in Newburgh. Yet Newburgh's unique demographics and crime rate made it challenging to identify appropriate comparison sites; those differences may explain why the rates did not change in Newburgh, while they declined one county over. Furthermore, the results of the DiD analysis suggest that the absolute changes in rates of gun violence in the comparison sites were not markedly different from changes in Newburgh. Although GVI does not appear to have exerted as large of an impact on firearms-related violence in Newburgh, it is possible that the model is slowly attenuating gun violence, given increases seen elsewhere in the same county. It is also possible that Newburgh continues to experience fluctuations in gun violence that defy clear identification of trends.

Chapter 4

Discussion & Recommendations

To date, the City of Newburgh is the smallest jurisdiction to have implemented the focused deterrence strategy known as the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) model. The current evaluation documented a decrease in the violent crime rate in Newburgh during GVI implementation. No statistically significant decline in *gun violence* specifically was observed during the GVI implementation period.

Programmatic Recommendations

As part of the interviews described in Chapter 2, members of the GVI task force were asked to provide recommendations for other sites interested in implementing the GVI model. Their feedback ranged from ways to utilize resources to community engagement. Interviewee feedback along with observations from the research team resulted in ten key recommendations for those seeking to implement GVI or similar initiatives.

- 1. Be open to implementing models developed in larger police departments.** Members of the task force described experiencing “growing pains” as the first small police department to implement GVI. Soon, the department came to appreciate that their small size could actually be an asset, as it allowed them to communicate and act quickly. As one task force member described, larger agencies may take “longer to react on certain things just because of the bureaucracy, whereas [in Newburgh,] it's two phone calls and people are out the door, which works to our advantage in some cases.”
- 2. Examine the ways that you do business.** In transitioning from Operation IMPACT to the GIVE initiative (and the resultant GVI model), task force members came to realize that the two initiatives differed in their approach to violent crime. Whereas Operation IMPACT primarily engaged officers assigned to the anti-crime unit and focused on more covert investigations and enforcement actions, the GIVE initiative sought to break down silos within the department through the emphasis on data driven policing and collaboration. Further, task force members described Operation IMPACT as being more reactionary, while programs like GVI are preemptive; as a result, the GIVE initiative has promoted faster responses to violence based on intelligence

gathered, while also promoting greater transparency between the police and the community.

- 3. Understand the programmatic environment.** Although it is common for multiple programs to be implemented within a city, when working within a small jurisdiction, it is imperative to understand where there is overlap and potential tension. For example, community-based leaders in Newburgh were working to implement the CURE Violence model during the same period that GVI was operating. A central component of CURE Violence is that staff are viewed as working independent of law enforcement, in order for them to be viewed by gang-involved individuals as credible messengers. Stakeholders described steps taken by the police to maintain a balance in respecting this aspect of the CURE Violence model while still communicating with the program to promote awareness of the range of violence prevention activities impacting the target community.
- 4. Secure buy in from your partners and promote transparency.** One of the key recommendations made by task force members was the need to make sure that partners follow through on their responsibilities. Although this has not been a challenge in Newburgh, task force members warned that if partners (particularly service providers) are not invested in the program, it will hurt program participants who accept assistance offers and will ultimately undermine program credibility.
- 5. Take a top-down approach to securing buy in from officers.** In addition to securing buy in from partners, law enforcement agencies need to secure buy in from line officers to ensure success. By taking a top-down approach in which executive command endorses the program, line officers can follow the example and understand how the program fits into their patrol responsibilities. As one task force member described, “Our patrol officers are not out of the loop on this. They know and they understand the program, so they know who our target group members are . . . The intel does come up from the patrol level as well.”
- 6. Build a structure and secure the resources necessary to sustain the program.** One of the challenges facing smaller departments like Newburgh is finding ways to allocate the necessary resources to run a GVI program. As described in Chapter 2, the reorganization of the department was an important step in building the structure

needed to support the program. Additionally, by securing state and federal funding, the program has been able to fund staff positions and overtime for enforcement actions.

- 7. Reflect on ways to improve program operations.** During call-in meetings, GVI task force members reportedly paid close attention to how things could be improved the next time. For example, the task force realized that simply moving the table where invitees could pick up their cell phones after the session led more individuals to stay for the group dinner. Thus, the call-in meetings evolve as the task force identifies practices, speakers, and messages that achieve maximum impact.
- 8. Be in it for the long haul.** Given the amount of planning and the resources devoted to implementing violence prevention programs such as GVI, stakeholders may feel pressure to produce instant results. However, programs take time to gain traction and require ongoing dedication. Stakeholders should adjust expectations accordingly and focus on other measures of success beyond crime statistics (e.g., how many call-in participants engaged in services).
- 9. Build a stable team structure.** In Newburgh, the members of the GVI task force have all been present since the planning phase of the project. This stability has helped forge strong relationships which have facilitated the information sharing and collaboration needed to run the program. As one task force member described, “This isn't just something I know I'm going to have to deal with for a year until I get my choice command out in some nice neighborhood. I'm here, we're all both feet in. Our anti-crime unit [has] been the enforcement arm since day one—they're invested. They know the groups; they know the areas. The DA's office, probation, everybody here has been [involved] since day one.”
- 10. Engage your community.** One challenge that the GVI task force faced was securing buy in from the community. Initially, the program was reported to be plagued by a great deal of misinformation and fear. Through community outreach conducted by law enforcement and the GVI program manager, community leaders came to understand that the program was targeting the most violent offenders who threatened the safety of the entire community. Such outreach requires a great deal of patience, dedication, and a willingness on the part of law enforcement to listen to individuals who may be openly critical of the criminal justice system. “What's important is to build that trust within the community ... to build that trust you have to have your partners follow through.”

Study Limitations & Future Research

The current evaluation presents several limitations that should be addressed by future research. Establishing appropriate comparison sites for the interrupted time series analysis was challenging, given Newburgh's unique demographics and crime problem. Future studies may benefit from looking at outcomes beyond crime rate trends, particularly when identifying an appropriate comparison site is difficult. For instance, individual-level outcomes (e.g., access to services, recidivism) or community perceptions of safety.

Although the technical assistance providers at the National Network for Safe Communities determined that the model would be a good fit for Newburgh, researchers may need to think of innovative ways to measure program impact when translating models developed in large, urban areas to smaller jurisdictions. Future research might benefit from a mixed methods approach, where qualitative data can provide better context for interpreting quantitative findings. For example, the GVI task force reported that participants from the first call-in (held in October 2015) called the service hub in March 2017—nearly a year and a half after their initial participation—to ask for help. Members of the task force hypothesized that people did not initially expect the program to last, but after seeing enough individuals take the “honorable exit” through continued call-ins, early participants may have realized that the offer of assistance was real. More specific to interrupted time series analysis, allowing for a longer implementation period may yield greater insight into how GVI can impact gun violence, especially as Newburgh reported the lowest crime rates in 10 years by the end of 2017 (Sparks 2018).

Finally, it may be challenging to isolate the effects of GVI given Newburgh's programmatic environment. Not only were the police enacting a variety of different programs and policies in addition to GVI, but community-based organizations were simultaneously working to implement the CURE Violence program. Thus, any positive impact on violent crime could potentially be explained as a cumulative effect of these efforts, rather than the result of GVI alone.

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Appendix A. Stakeholder Interview Protocol

CENTER FOR COURT INNOVATION Project Safe Neighborhoods Newburgh Group Violence Intervention Program

Name: _____

Position: _____

Agency: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Introductory Script: This evaluation is being conducted by the Center for Court Innovation (CCI). We are an independent nonprofit organization that has received an award from the Bureau of Justice Assistance's Project Safe Neighborhoods to serve as the research partner for your program. The purpose of these interviews is to help develop an understanding of how your city has implemented the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) program. This will help us understand what is involved in setting up and managing the project, and to gain a better understanding of what works and what doesn't so that programs based on the GVI model can be continually improved. The questions will be strictly related to your role as a member of the GVI task force. We want to know about your role in the program, local crime issues, and how the program has impacted them. The interview should take approximately 60 minutes. The researchers will keep all your information confidential and will not use your name or other identifying information as a part of the study. Participation is voluntary. You can refuse to answer any question for any reason and end the interview at any time.

Do you consent to Participate?

Verbal Response (circle one): Yes No

Participant consented to have interview audio recorded (circle one): Yes No

I. History & Environment

1. Can you offer a general description of the jurisdiction you serve, including the degree to which it is urban, suburban, or rural; population size if you know; major

racial/ethnic groups; and general socioeconomic attributes of the population (i.e., occupations, incomes, education characteristics)?

2. Describe the structure of your law enforcement agency: About how many law enforcement officials work in the agency? Can you provide a sense of how many civilians work in your agency and the general roles they play?
3. Can you please describe the crime concerns that Newburgh is currently facing?
4. Were any initiatives implemented prior to GVI in order to address these issues?
5. Can you please describe how your agency became involved in development/proposal for the DCJS GIVE grant? Why did your agency seek out additional funding through BJA's Project Safe Neighborhoods?

II. Roles of Task Force Members

6. What are your goals as the (Program Manager/Crime Analyst/Field Intelligence Officer/Law Enforcement Point of Contact)? Have they changed since you started this job?
7. Have you worked in violence prevention before?
8. Did you receive training on the GVI model? Was it helpful?
9. Is the actual job different from what you expected? In what ways?

II. Initial Planning

10. Can you describe how all of the key stakeholders initially came to the table? Was there a formal or informal planning team? Even if informally, who planned the program, and what sorts of issues were discussed or debated held during the planning process?
11. How did the working group conduct their initial assessment of violence?
12. Can you describe the demonstration enforcement action leading into the call-in?

III. Call-in Preparation, Execution, & Maintenance

13. Describe how members of violent groups were selected for the initial call-in? How were they notified?
14. Please describe the initial call-in meeting.
15. Of the individuals at the initial call-in, do you have a sense of how many engaged with your social service provider?
16. Did you notice any changes in criminal activity after the initial call-in? What was the follow-through on the call-in promises?
17. What was the community response to the call-in?
18. Did the GVI task force partnerships change in anyway after the initial call-in? Were there changes in terms of ongoing local or federal investigations? Changes in policy?

19. Did you hold repeat call-ins?
20. Please describe the future direction of the program/how did the program change over time.

V. Goals, Strengths, Weaknesses

21. Aside from a reduction in violent crime, are there any other goals that you hope the model accomplishes?
22. What have been some of the most important barriers you've faced at different times in the program's planning and operational history? What would you like to change about the program?
23. What would you say are the greatest strengths and weaknesses of the program?
24. Do you feel like GVI was the appropriate model for your city and context? Why or why not?
25. What are some lessons learned that you think would be useful for other stakeholders to know if they wanted to replicate the GVI model?

Appendix B. Call-in Observation Form

- Preparation
 - Which # call-in was this?
 - Where was the meeting held?
 - What was the sign-in and security like?

- Participation:
 - How many people were invited? _____
 - By what method? _____

 - How many people attended? _____
 - Did any arrive late? _____

 - Were there any disruptions? (explain)

 - Did participants appear to be engaged? _____

 - How many stayed after the presentation to talk to presenters? _____
 - Who did they stay after to talk with?

 - How many observers were present and who were they?
 - Total:
 - CNPD Officers:
 - DA's Office:
 - Community Members:
 - Service Providers
 - Other (describe):

 - What was the overall tone of the meeting?

- Message presented by moderator: Did the moderator cover the following topics?
 - We don't want you to pick up a gun or commit another violent crime
 - Introduction of the (federal/local law) enforcement
 - Introduction of the service provider
 - Introduction of victim of gun violence
 - Introduction of ex-offender
 - Introduction of community representative
 - Was the moderator respectful?
 - Additional comments:

- CNPD: Did the CNPD cover the following topics?
 - Why the participants are present today
 - Specified that they are messengers for their group
 - Explained strengthened law enforcement collaboration
 - Introduced new enforcement rules
 - Discussion of enforcement action (visual aids? yes/no)
 - Explained that help is available to those that want it
 - My job is to keep you safe (community care)
 - Provide details about the community and violence within the community
 - Obey the law and you won't get in trouble
 - Was the CNPD representative respectful?
 - Additional comments:

- Orange County DAs Office: Did the Prosecutor cover the following topics?
 - What will happen if you make the choice to pick up a gun
 - Photos with the possible sentence on the back
 - Was the prosecutor respectful?
 - Additional comments:

- US Attorney's Office: Did the US Attorney's office cover the following topics?
 - What happens if you get prosecuted by the US attorney's office
 - Choice is yours
 - Specific sentences for gun crimes
 - Was the US attorney's office respectful?
 - Additional comments:

Service Provider: Did the Service Provider cover the following topics?

- Did they speak out against violence?
 - Did they stress that help is available? (Unconditional help? Yes/No)
 - Did they explain the social service structure? (Avoided jargon? Yes/No)
 - Did they tell them how to contact them?
 - Were they respectful?
 - How was it received?
 - Additional comments (including services offered):
-
- Victim of Gun Violence: Did the victim cover the following topics?
 - Personal story about how gun violence impacted them
 - How violence impacts the community/family (specifics)
 - How violence impacts the families of offenders
 - Was the victim respectful?
 - Additional comments:

- Formerly Incarcerated Individuals: Did the ex-offenders cover the following topics?
 - Personal story about early poor choices
 - How they changed their life around (specifics)
 - It can be hard to make a change
 - Choices that the participants have to turn life around
 - Was the formerly incarcerated person respectful?
 - Additional comments:

- Community Representative: Did the community representative cover the following topics?
 - Personal story about how violence impacts them
 - How violence impacts the community (specifics)
 - Importance of role models in the community
 - Community needs to grow/thrive and they're a part of that
 - Appeal to stay out of prison and in the community
 - Extended promise to help?
 - Was the community representative respectful?
 - Additional comments:

Appendix C. Difference-in-Differences Regression Models

Table C.1. Difference-in-Differences for Violent Crime Rate OLS Regressions

	City to City						City to County		
	Newburgh to Middletown			Newburgh to Poughkeepsie			Newburgh to Orange County		
N	160			160			160		
Adjusted R ²	0.707			0.514			0.835		
F	129.034***			57.094***			269.620***		
Variable	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Constant	0.432	0.035		0.743	0.036		0.193	0.031	
Location	0.874	0.049	0.874***	0.563	0.052	0.691***	1.113	0.043	0.947***
Time	-0.048	0.071	-0.041	-0.208	0.075	-0.217**	-0.028	0.063	-0.020
Location x Time	-0.170	0.101	-0.110+	-0.010	0.106	-0.008	-0.19	0.089	-0.105*

+p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001.

Note. Location was coded as 0 = Comparison, 1 = Newburgh and Time was coded as 0 = pre-GVI, 1 = GVI. The interaction term is the cross product of these two variables.

Table C.2. Difference-in-Differences for Gun Violence Rate OLS Regressions

	City to City						City to County		
	Newburgh to Middletown			Newburgh to Poughkeepsie			Newburgh to Orange County		
N	160			160			160		
Adjusted R ²	0.59			0.342			0.666		
F	77.199***			28.588***			106.520***		
Variable	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Constant	0.058	0.014		0.177	0.016		0.037	0.013	
Location	0.276	0.020	0.797***	0.157	0.022	0.519***	0.297	0.019	0.826***
Time	0.029	0.029	0.072	-0.078	0.032	-0.221*	0.001	0.027	0.003
Location x Time	-0.038	0.041	-0.070	0.070	0.046	0.150	-0.010	0.039	-0.017

+p<.10, * p<.05, ** p<.01, ***p<.001.

Note. Location was coded as 0 = Comparison, 1 = Newburgh and Time was coded as 0 = pre-GVI, 1 = GVI. The interaction term is the cross product of these two variables.