



Pittsburgh Initiative to Reduce Crime

Information obtained from National Network For Safe Communities frequently asked questions
http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/npsc/pdfs/NNSC_FAQS_Spring2010.pdf

What is PIRC? PIRC is a group violence deterrence strategy based on Boston's Operation Ceasefire, which was launched in 1996 and subsequently in many other jurisdictions. The strategy relies on direct communication with violent groups by a partnership of law-enforcement, service providers and community figures. Together the partnership delivers a unified — no violence message, explains that violence will bring law enforcement attention to entire groups, offers services and alternatives to group members, and articulates community norms against violence.

What is the impact of the Ceasefire strategy? The typical impact of Ceasefire is a 35-50 percent reduction in homicides and a significant, but sometimes lesser, reduction in non-fatal shootings. Often larger reductions are achieved in a specific, highly victimized demographic. An evaluation of Boston, for example, showed a 50 percent drop in homicides and a two-thirds reduction in homicide among men aged 24 and younger.

What is a call-in? A call-in is a meeting of law enforcement representatives, community influentials, and group-involved offenders, usually on probation or parole, used to communicate the strategy's key messages to the offenders and, through them, back to the entire groups with whom they are associated. In the call-in, the law enforcement-community partnership clearly communicates: (1) a credible, moral message against violence; (2) a credible law enforcement message about the consequences of further violence; and (3) a genuine offer of help for those who want it. The strategy involves other methods of communication, but the call-in is the traditional tool. Community supervision agencies (probation officers) are operational partners in the implementation of the strategy; these agencies can direct group members to attend a call-in as a condition of their supervision. Recently, practitioners in several cities have even held successful Call-Ins by asking group and gang members to attend voluntarily. The call-in has been found to be an efficient and effective method of communicating the strategy's key messages back to the entire universe of violent groups in a given jurisdiction.

Why should PIRC work in Pittsburgh? The strategy has three key elements that address what really drives violence on the street, including the dynamics between and within groups. 1) It communicates to groups the community's strong desire that the violence stop; that offenders are valued and the community wants them to succeed ; 2) it offers help to group members who want it; 3) it creates certain and credible consequences for homicide and shootings that are directed at the group as a whole. Because groups drive violence, a group focus for legal consequences is far more meaningful than the usual legal attention given to individuals.

The strategy is *high-activity* but *low-enforcement*. The work is done by setting and maintaining clear standards, not by large numbers of arrests and crackdowns. Communities typically welcome it, and complaints against police typically fall. Community figures get a chance to say to group members, in safe settings, that their behavior is intolerable, and gang members clearly often listen. As groups come to understand that violence by one may lead to attention to all, the peer pressure that drives the violence is reversed. Community figures learn that law enforcement is not draconian and indiscriminate but can selectively focus on those individuals and groups who are truly dangerous to the community and who have rejected genuine offers of help. Law enforcement learns that nearly all of the community loathes the violence, will stand up and say so and will support reasonable enforcement action. Many group members, who themselves find the violence intolerable and worry about their friends and loved ones, readily take the —honorable exit that clear standards provide.

What's next after the call-in? First, the PIRC message must reach the offenders. If another homicide occurs, law enforcement will take swift action against the entire group. Another call-in will be held and the PIRC message will be reinforced.

What preparation was necessary? To launch PIRC required the coordination of law enforcement, service delivery agencies and community members. Law enforcement agencies must understand the strategy and agree to work together to deliver the consistent message. Service providers must be identified to set aside capacity to service the target population. Community members must understand the strategy and agree to work with law enforcement.

Why were these individuals selected to attend these call-in sessions? The individuals attending these call-ins represent one or more participants or members of each street gang or group in the City of Pittsburgh. In addition, they are on probation or parole, so they can be required to attend. They will be instructed to take the message back to their gang group.

What is the University of Pittsburgh's doing for PIRC? The City has contracted with the University Of Pittsburgh School Of Social Work to assist with the law enforcement research necessary to begin the initiative, monitor the implementation of the strategy and evaluate the effectiveness of the initiative. They have subcontracted with the University of Cincinnati Policing Institute to do the law enforcement research. They are currently monitoring our implementation. Ultimately, they will assist police in determining whether the implementation of this strategy has resulted in a reduction of group affiliated homicides.

PIRC Timeline

September 2008	-PIRC announced to public by Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, City Councilman Rev. Ricky Burgess and Professor David Kennedy
January 2009	-City Council authorized \$200,000 for University of Pittsburgh and Professor David Kennedy
June	-Jay Gilmer begins as PIRC Coordinator
July	-Pitt and Kennedy Contracts effective
September	-University of Pittsburgh subcontracts with University of Cincinnati Policing Institute for group identification and homicide incident review
October	-David Kennedy visits Pittsburgh
November	-University of Cincinnati research team's first visit with Pittsburgh Police
December 2009	-Delegation from Pittsburgh attends first conference of National Network for Safe Communities in New York City
January 2010	-Mayor meets with Law Enforcement Team
March	-University of Cincinnati research team's second visit with Pittsburgh Police
April	-City Council authorized \$7,000 more for Kennedy contract -David Kennedy visits Pittsburgh
May	-Mayor meets with Governing Board and Implementation Team -Requests for proposals distributed for PIRC services and gang group outreach
June	-Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc. selected by Proposal Review Committee to provide services to members of target population -One Vision One Life, Inc. selected to provide outreach to target population -Delegation from Pittsburgh views call-ins in Cincinnati, Ohio -City Council approves \$200,000 for services and gang group outreach
July	-Contracts with Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc and One Vision One Life, Inc. effective -First call-ins by Pittsburgh Initiative to Reduce Crime

PIRC Organizational Structure

Governing Board: Mayor Luke Ravenstahl
Public Safety Director Michael Huss
Police Chief Nate Harper
City Councilmen Ricky Burgess

Consultant: Professor David Kennedy

Implementation Team: This team coordinates the launch of PIRC. It is comprised of each team facilitator, the PIRC Coordinator, PIRC's research partners, and PIRC's service delivery and gang group outreach partners.

Jay Gilmer, PIRC Coordinator
Deputy Police Chief Paul Donaldson (Facilitator of Law Enforcement Committee)
Valerie Dixon (Facilitator of Community Voice Team)
Wendy Etheridge Smith & Will Thompkins (Co-facilitators of Service Delivery Team)
Dr. John Wallace, University of Pittsburgh (Research Team)
Dr. Ralph Bangs, University of Pittsburgh (Research Team)
Erin Dalton, Allegheny County Department of Human Services (Research Team)
Richard Garland, One Vision One Life, PIRC Gang Group Outreach Provider
Cecelia Jenkins, Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc., PIRC Services Provider

Working Teams: These are the teams that planned and executed the details of PIRC.

Law Enforcement Team

Deputy Police Chief Paul Donaldson (Facilitator)
Thomas McCaffrey, County Probation
Robert Cessar, Acting US Attorney
Steve Zappala, District Attorney
Helen Lynch, Administrator, Criminal Division, Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas

Service Delivery Team

Wendy Etheridge-Smith, United Way (Co-Facilitator)
Will Thompkins, Pittsburgh Project (Co-Facilitator)
Reggie Young, Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Tamiko Stanley, City Personnel
Chuck Sanders, Concerned Citizen, Business Owner and Philanthropist
Lisa Kuzma, Project manager, R.K. Mellon Foundation
Cecelia Jenkins, Executive Director, Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc., Service Provider

Community Voice Team

Valerie Dixon, Coalition Against Violence, B-PEP, Center for Victims of Violence and Crime (Facilitator)
Richard Garland, Executive Director, One Vision One Life, Gang Group Outreach Provider
** There are other members of the community voice team, however, we do not have permission to disclose their names.*