Project CLEARS

Community–Law Enforcement Alignment to Resolve Shootings

FINAL REPORT

July 2025

Topeka (KS) Police Department

Arnold Ventures

RTI INTERNATIONAL

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1. Introduction and Context

1.1 Introduction and Rationale for Project CLEARS

Violent crime clearance rates, including for fatal and nonfatal shooting cases, have remained consistently low for decades and, in the case of homicide, have continued to decline.[1] A clearance rate is the proportion of crimes known to the police that are solved through arrest or exceptional means.[2] One barrier to clearing shooting incidents is a lack of victim and witness participation in investigations. Prior research has shown that voluntary cooperation with the police,[3,4] including a willingness to participate in investigations, is associated with factors such as the community's perceptions of law enforcement legitimacy and its trust in law enforcement. To improve violent crime clearance rates, law enforcement should identify strategies for strengthening community engagement, which can lead to improved perceptions of legitimacy and trust in the department.

Partnerships between law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and community-based organizations[5] (CBOs) that are trusted by the community present opportunities for LEAs to build trust with the community, thereby increasing community perceptions of LEA legitimacy. According to a brief released by the International Association of Chiefs of Police,[6] "Community organizations can be key stakeholders for building partnerships. Trust is often transferable, so community members who trust partner organizations may also trust police agencies, creating a foundation of legitimacy that can be leveraged for community cohesion." Improved perceptions of legitimacy may increase the likelihood of case closure through increased community participation in the investigative process. Furthermore, LEAs can leverage partnerships with trusted CBO partners to assist with messaging after shooting incidents, provide direct outreach, and serve in intermediary roles to facilitate community participation in investigations for purposes of community safety.

Project CLEARS (Community–Law Enforcement Alignment to Resolve Shootings) is an initiative funded by Arnold Ventures with three primary objectives:

1) Identifying high-performing LEAs based on clearance rates for fatal and nonfatal shootings to conduct assessments to learn about effective strategies associated with high case closure

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[1] Lum, C., Wellford, C., Scott, T., Vovak, H., & Scherer, A. (2018). *Identifying effective investigative practices: A national study using trajectory analysis, case studies, and investigative data*. Final report to the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. George Mason University.
[2] FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR). (2019). *Crime in the United States, 2019*. https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/clearances
[3] Hinds, L., & Murphy, K. (2007). Public satisfaction with police: Using procedural justice to improve police legitimacy. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology, 40*, 27-42. https://doi.org/10.1375/acri.40.1.27
[4] Mazerolle, L., Antrobus, E., Bennett, S., & Tyler, T. R. (2013). Shaping citizen perceptions of police legitimacy: A randomized field trial of procedural justice. *Criminology, 51*(1), 33–63. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2012.00289.x
[5] For the purpose of this project, we define CBOs broadly to include a wide variety of community partners, including grassroots organizations, formal nonprofit organizations, and offices of local government.
[6] International Association of Chiefs of Police. (n.d.). *Community engagement and dialogue*. https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/_5.%20CPE%20Community%20engagement%20and%20Dialogue%20%281%29.pdf

2) Understanding effective investigative practices for case clearance, as well as identifying opportunities for improvements to develop recommendations for participating agencies such as the Topeka Police Department (TPD) along with the broader law enforcement community

3) Identifying existing strengths and opportunities to increase community participation in gun violence prevention and response in partnership with LEAs, with a specific emphasis on leveraging CBOs to increase victim and witness participation in investigations

Project CLEARS allows for in-depth, on-site assessment activities by a team of subject matter experts in investigations, forensics, and community engagement using the methods identified below.

1.2   Project Methodology

For the CLEARS assessment in Topeka, the project team collected data using diverse methods to consider various operational and administrative activities associated with the investigation of fatal and nonfatal shootings and to collect information about the TPD's engagement, communication, and collaboration with community partners. Data collection methods included the following.

Interviews with TPD investigative and command staff and external law enforcement and prosecutorial partners (N = 23): Interviews were conducted with detectives and supervisors from TPD's Homicide Unit; supervisors from various support units and staff, including the Criminal Intelligence Unit, and Patrol; Crime Scene Investigations (CSI); the Crime Analysis Unit; local prosecutors; federal law enforcement partners; and members of the TPD command staff. Interviews focused on the structure and operation of investigative and support units, investigative processes, perceptions of community participation in investigations, investigative challenges and what is working well, and collaboration with internal TPD units and with community partners.

Review of policies: The assessment team reviewed relevant TPD standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to investigations, community police officers, patrol function and calls for service, crime prevention and community programs, property and evidence, intelligence and surveillance, crime analysis unit, and crime victim assistance unit.

Systematic case file coding and review: The assessment team reviewed 40 fatal shooting and 37 nonfatal shooting investigative case files and coded over 100 variables reflecting the crime characteristics and agency follow-up for each case to capture the common features of shooting incidents and the actions taken by TPD in response to them.

TPD interviews and survey with staff in community engagement positions (N = 7 interviews; N = 4 surveys): Interviews were conducted with TPD personnel including community police officers and supervisors in the Community Outreach Bureau (COB); Crime Stoppers coordinator; and a victim advocate. Four personnel in the COB completed a survey to identify CBOs that they work with.

CBO leader interviews (N = 13): Interviews were conducted with CBO leaders active in gun violence prevention and response efforts. Some interviewees represented more than one CBO. CBOs included in these interviews were identified by TPD command staff, TPD officers and other community-engaged personnel, a media scan for CBOs identified as active in this area, and recommendations from other CBO leaders.

Media scan: A review of local news articles was conducted. A keyword search using the terms "gun violence" + "Topeka," "gun violence prevention" + "Topeka," "gun violence response" + "Topeka," and "community groups against gun violence in Topeka" was used to identify news articles over the past year to identify potential CBOs to contact for interviews and to understand community perceptions as reflected in media reports. These articles were systematically scanned for a 12-month time period (May 2024–April 2025).

Local Context Related to Gun Violence in Topeka

Community Gun Violence Incidents

According to community interviewees, gun violence was perceived to be a major problem by most. Topeka experienced its most violent year in 2023, with 35 homicides. A January 2025 media report[7] highlighted the homicides from 2023 and 2024 showing that the number of juvenile homicide victims dropped to zero in 2024 compared to accounting for 47% of the city's 36 homicide victims in 2023. The homicide rate decreased in Topeka 2024, which according to city leaders, was attributed to residents having greater access to mental health care, food, the work of the TPD, and community-led efforts to support law enforcement and the community.[8] Criminal charges were filed in 11 of Topeka's 21 homicides in 2024 and in two others, the suspect died of suicide. No arrests or charges were filed in five of the 21 homicide cases. Chief Vallejo became TPD chief effective January 20, 2025. The new administration has inherited community concerns about law enforcement transparency in officer-involved shootings which was noted by community respondents during assessment interviews and in the media scan. Concerns are related recently to two high-profile incidents. The community noted concerns about TPD not releasing body camera footage following officer-involved shootings. One incident involved a man who was experiencing a mental health crisis being shot 34 times by TPD officers in 2022.[9] No charges were filed against the officers involved, and the community called for the release of the body camera footage. An attorney for the family of the deceased subsequently released body camera footage to two media outlets.[10,11] According to media reports, the video purportedly contradicts the narrative provided by TPD officers about the incident.[12] Further, according to the media report, the family of the deceased requested to meet with TPD following the shooting, but the request was declined. The release of police video from officer-involved shootings is rare in Kansas due to the Kansas Open Records Act, which allows authorities to deny the release of video.[13] In another officer-involved shooting leaving a man critically wounded in January 2025, the TPD chief considered releasing the video and stated so during a news

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[7] https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/crime/2025/01/06/topeka-saw-21-homicides-in-2024-where-each-case-stands-in-court/77233921007/
[8] https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/crime/2024/11/27/topeka-leaders-address-recent-shootings-and-dropping-homicide-rate/76590756007/
[9] https://kansasreflector.com/2025/02/26/lawyer-fought-to-allow-suffering-to-speak-in-topeka-shooting-yet-she-now-faces-admonishment/
[10] https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/local/2025/02/11/attorney-must-explain-why-video-was-released-in-topeka-fatal-shooting/78384630007/
[11] https://kansasreflector.com/briefs/topeka-police-lawyers-in-wrongful-death-case-want-familys-attorney-punished-for-sharing-video/
[12] https://kansasreflector.com/2025/01/31/videos-show-topeka-police-killed-black-man-holding-wrench-not-knife-contradicting-narrative/
[13] https://kansasreflector.com/2025/01/31/videos-show-topeka-police-killed-black-man-holding-wrench-not-knife-contradicting-narrative/

conference.[14] However, the chief does not have the authority to make that decision in Topeka; only the city manager can authorize it.[15] More will be discussed about transparency in Section 3.

A November 2024 article highlighted concerns about two shootings in North Topeka which occurred approximately 48 hours apart in the same location. In the article, a city council representative stated that the community needed to apply a public health approach to address violent crime. An article from March 2024[16] highlighted that gun violence in Topeka disproportionately affects the 66604 zip code. The 70th Brown Coalition held an event, "The Health of the BIPOC Community: A Discussion of Gun Violence" to bring attention to the disproportionate harm that gun violence does to people of color. Other community-based partners included Stormont Vail Health, Moms Demand Action, and local activists. In response to concerns about gun violence, community partners developed the Community Inspired Violence Intervention Coalition (CIVIC) which is working to address underlying causes of gun violence and will include violence intervention efforts with individuals at highest risk for gun violence victimization and perpetration through street outreach workers. More about CIVIC and community efforts to address gun violence, including findings from interviews with community leaders, presented in Section 3. Topeka's gun violence response has been community-driven with local community leaders pushing for solutions through empowering the community to develop them. As one leader stated, the answers to the community's problems should come from the community.[17]

Recent media coverage of gun violence incidents included updates about suspect arrests and convictions. Several of the recent gun violence incidents involved multiple victims. Most media coverage included requests for the public to provide additional information about incidents using the telltpd@topeka.org email address or phone number or contacting Shawnee County Crime Stoppers via phone or clicking a link to access the Crime Stoppers online reporting system.

Strengths and Opportunities

The CLEARS assessment identified strengths and opportunities within the TPD and the Topeka community. In Section 2, we will describe what was learned about TPD's investigative practices, including those strategies driving TPD's high performance in case closure, as well as recommendations from the assessment team to improve investigations. In Section 3, we will describe what was learned from assessment activities, focusing on community engagement, and include recommendations to improve TPD's community engagement strategies. In Section 4, we will discuss what was learned about community partnerships and community participation in investigations and recommendations to improve these areas.

2.   TPD Investigations Policies and Practices

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[14] https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/local/2025/01/28/will-topeka-release-body-cam-clip-of-recent-officer-involved-shooting/77996213007/
[15] https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/local/2025/01/28/will-topeka-release-body-cam-clip-of-recent-officer-involved-shooting/77996213007/
[16] https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/local/2024/03/22/topekans-discuss-gun-violence-in-bipoc-areas-and-search-for-solutions/73045380007/
[17] https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/local/2024/03/22/topekans-discuss-gun-violence-in-bipoc-areas-and-search-for-solutions/73045380007/

Interviews with TPD personnel, as well as with local and federal partners, provided the opportunity to gather direct perspectives from individuals who participate in fatal and nonfatal shooting cases. In Topeka, fatal shootings are investigated by TPD's Homicide Unit, which comprises seven detectives and one sergeant and is part of the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB). Homicide detectives work during the day shift on Mondays through Fridays and rotate on-call shifts during off-duty hours. Nonfatal shootings that occur during the week are typically handled by general CIB detectives assigned to the second and third shifts.

The assessment team identified staff positions for interviews and coordinated with TPD to set up these interviews, most of which were conducted in person using semi-structured interview guides. The interview guides used are available to TPD or its partners upon request. Interviews typically lasted 30–60 minutes. Through these interviews, the assessment team identified several TPD policies and practices that appear to have contributed to the department's success with clearing homicide and nonfatal shooting cases.

This section describes those best practices and provides a few additional recommendations for how TPD can build on these strengths. These best practices and recommendations focus on TPD's operations and investigative processes, whereas those directly related to community engagement and outreach are in Section 3 of this report.

2.1   Investigative Policies and Practices Contributing to TPD's Success

The assessment team found that TPD's new leadership is committed to strengthening the agency's investigative practices and engagement with the community. Additionally, TPD is staffed with dedicated personnel who work hard to prevent and address violent crime in Topeka. This section discusses some of the policies and practices that appear to be contributing to TPD's investigative success.

2.1.1 Promoting Experience and Teamwork within the Homicide Unit

Personnel from throughout TPD said that detectives on the Homicide Unit are experienced, hard-working investigators who operate efficiently and who truly want to be there working cases. They said that the Homicide detectives are very supportive of one another and work well together as a team, and that members of the team are always ready to volunteer if anyone else on the squad needs help with a case. The assessment team found that the attraction of experienced, senior detectives to the Homicide Unit can be attributed in part to the unit being considered a desirable assignment at TPD, and in part due to TPD's shift bidding process for detectives, which gives day shift priority to more senior detectives. Interviewees said that occasionally non-Homicide detectives who are interested in working homicide cases are able to shadow members of the Homicide Unit, which creates a pool of detectives who already have some homicide experience if a vacancy opens up in the squad.

2.1.2 Effectively Managing Homicide Caseloads

In addition to homicides, members of the Homicide Unit also investigate other serious violent crimes such as robberies and aggravated assaults. Interviewees said that caseloads are generally manageable for Homicide detectives, who have plenty of time and resources to fully work their cases with little to no hindrance. The assessment team learned that Homicide detectives typically carry an average of 1-3 homicide cases and 2-3 non-homicide cases, a caseload that is consistent with national best practices that recommend that homicide detectives take on an average of no more than four to six new homicide

cases per year.[18] Manageable caseloads mean that detectives have the time to conduct thorough follow-up, track down leads, and focus on solving cases before being inundated with new ones.

2.1.3   Investing in Investigative Tools and Technology

The assessment team found that TPD has made several critical investments in tools and technologies that can be critical to the success of modern investigations. For example, TPD has three trained detectives who are dedicated solely to collecting and processing digital evidence from phones, videos, computers, and other electronic sources. Interviewees said that this digital evidence team is so proficient that sometimes federal agencies even seek their help in processing their own digital evidence. TPD has a Cellebrite machine and access to Cellebrite Premium and GreyKey, which allows personnel to extract digital evidence from cell phones in house instead of relying on external partners. The assessment team recommends that TPD build upon this strong foundation and consider expanding its digital evidence capabilities, the details of which are discussed in Section 2.2 of this report.

Additionally, TPD recently partnered with the Shawnee County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) to launch a Real Time Crime Center (RTCC), which is housed in the SCSO/TPD headquarters. Interviewees said that the RTCC has already provided valuable assistance in criminal investigations by allowing detectives to access videos from cameras throughout the city. TPD members now also have access to the RTCC video streaming platform, FususONE, which enables officers, detectives, etc. to search for and pull videos directly without the assistance of Intelligence personnel. This has streamlined the process of using videos to identify and track down leads, including in homicide and nonfatal shooting investigations (See Section 2.2 for more information on the RTCC and TPD's crime analysis and intelligence functions).

TPD also has an in-house National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) machine that allows it to process firearms evidence more efficiently. TPD's NIBIN work is discussed in more detail in Section 2.2.

2.1.4   Maintaining a Good Relationship with Prosecutors

Interviewees from both the TPD and the District Attorney's (DA's) Office noted that the two agencies have a strong working relationship. They said that this is in part because the philosophies of agency leaders were generally aligned and that there is a mutual respect between personnel in the two agencies. There is a core group of prosecutors who regularly collaborate with TPD detectives. Interviewees also said that frequent communication played a key role in maintaining this strong relationship. For example, there are standing quarterly meetings between the DA's Office and TPD Command Staff, and detectives and prosecutors reportedly engage in "constant" emails and other informal communication. In addition, interviewees said that prosecutors and detectives provide informal cross-training to one another. For example, detectives have trained prosecutors on certain aspects of conducting cell phone downloads and narcotics investigations, while prosecutors have provided training on legal standards.

The coordination and communication between TPD and the DA's Office also appears to be strong when it comes to fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations. Prosecutors are on call and available to provide

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[18] PERF & BJA. (2018). Promising strategies for strengthening homicide investigations. Retrieved from https://www.policeforum.org/assets/homicideinvestigations.pdf.

assistance with things such as reviewing search warrants, and interviewees said that prosecutors are very responsive.

One of the most widely-praised strategies among detectives and prosecutors alike was the use of charging presentations for all major felony events. During the charging presentation, the lead case detective, along with the detective's supervisor(s) and other detectives as needed, go to the DA's Office and walk through the case using PowerPoint presentations, photos, videos, etc. Interviewees said that this process has been incredibly valuable for both prosecutors and detectives, as it gives each side a better understanding of the case, provides a forum for sharing information and asking questions back and forth, and gives participants a chance to give feedback on what they need from one another.

TPD should continue building upon its strong communication with the DA's Office as a way to not only further strengthen the relationship between the two agencies, but also to help TPD establish its own priorities and boundaries when it comes to standards for arrest (as they may be different from the DA's Office charging standards).

2.1.5   Coordinating With External Partners

It appears that TPD effectively works with federal, state, and local partners to address violent crime in the region. For example, TPD's headquarters is co-located with the Shawnee County Sheriff's Office (SCSO), and the two agencies appear to work together very effectively. They recently partnered to launch the RTCC, the SCSO regularly attends TPD's Crime Strategies meetings, and the agencies participate in quarterly regional intelligence meetings.

TPD also has a strong relationship with several federal law enforcement partners. At the time of this assessment TPD had several task force officers (TFOs) assigned to federal agencies, including two with the FBI, one with the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS), and one with the ATF. These TFOs help facilitate coordination between TPD and its federal partners, including when it comes to fatal and nonfatal shootings. For example, when a shooting occurs, the USMS TFO will work with TPD detectives to determine if there is a suspect that the USMS can help track down. Interviewees said that ideally this contact would be made immediately upon identifying a suspect, even if TPD did not yet have a warrant, so that USMS can start looking for the suspect and then immediately take the suspect into custody when the warrant comes out.

2.1.6   Fostering Witness Participation in Homicide Cases

Interviewees said that the community is typically cooperative when it comes to participating in homicide investigations. They said that people are generally positive towards detectives and their attempts to solicit information about homicide cases, and that the public is usually willing to turn over doorbell camera footage to investigators. Many interviewees attributed the community's willingness to cooperate – at least when it comes to homicide investigations – to the experience of Homicide Unit detectives and their ability to build rapport with families and community members. Some interviewees said that the community's willingness to cooperate with investigations depended on whether the incident involved a person's family member, whether a rival gang/crew was involved, whether there was a fear of retaliation, etc.

It is important to note that during this assessment, reports of strong witness/community participation were mostly limited to homicide investigations. The assessment team heard that in other cases, including

nonfatal shootings, members of the community were typically more reluctant to speak out. Interviewees from the community also provided insight into how TPD could strengthen its relationship with the community in order to better facilitate victim, witness, and community participation. These strategies are discussed in Sections 2 and 3 of this report.

2.1.7   Effectively Processing Firearms and Ballistics Evidence

TPD's policy is to test fire every firearm that it receives as evidence. The agency has an in-house NIBIN machine and seven crime scene investigators (CSIs) who are trained and certified to use it. As a result of this investment into equipment and personnel, interviewees said that there is a quick turnaround time for entering evidence into NIBIN. This can significantly help promote effective and timely investigations into gun crimes. The assessment team learned that TPD is currently working on developing a NIBIN policy, which will help define what a "crime gun" is and provide guidance on the use of this important resource. Recommendations for further additional strategies to leverage firearms and ballistics evidence can be found in Section 2.2 of this report.

2.1.8   Leveraging Crime Stoppers in Investigations

TPD has Crime Stoppers personnel housed within the agency. Interviewees said that there is a good amount of public participation with Crime Stoppers and that TPD receives tips on a daily basis, many of which have been helpful for solving cases. Tip submission is available online and in Spanish. There is also an enhancement reward for guns through Crime Stoppers (an extra $100 per gun, up to $500), and this is advertised in the local jail to help encourage tips. Given the potential usefulness of Crime Stoppers tips, the assessment team recommends that TPD develop a focused process for assigning these tips for investigation.

TPD has taken some steps to promote the use of Crime Stoppers within the community. For example, TPD detectives appeared in an educational video about Crime Stoppers and gave examples of how the program has helped solve cases. This video, which is available to the community, could serve as a model for other agencies looking to disseminate information about their own Crime Stoppers program. There is also currently an effort to implement a Crime Stoppers program in local schools, and the Crime Stoppers app is on the students' school-issued Chromebooks. Interviewees said that detectives also pass out information about Crime Stoppers while at the crime scene. Crime Stoppers materials and reporting options are available in Spanish. The Crime Stoppers liaison has been intentional about outreach to reach target populations such as the Spanish-speaking residents and individuals in the local jail. There is a reward enhancement for information about illegal firearms through the Gun Stoppers program. If an illegal firearm is recovered, a tipster can receive up to an additional $100 per firearm up to $500. Strategies for further promoting Crime Stoppers can be found in Section 4.

2.1.9   Leveraging the Community Outreach Bureau and Community Policing Unit

TPD's Community Policing Unit (CPU) is consulted frequently for assistance with fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations. While the CPU has experienced decreased staffing currently consisting of two sergeants and three community police officers (CPOs). The CPU sits within TPD's Community Outreach Bureau (COB). CPU and COB interviewees described the ways that they are utilized by detectives, which included both proactive outreach from the CPU to detectives to ask how they can assist and outreach from detectives to the CPU to request assistance. The CPU has strong relationships with residents

through Neighborhood Improvement Association meetings due to the way the CPOs approach their work and engage with the community. The CPU assists investigations by helping to locate individuals of interest, soliciting information from the community about incidents (which often happens at NIA meetings), gathering video from residents and businesses, and assisting with search warrants and canvassing. In fact, prior to a CLEARS assessment interview, a CPU officer and homicide detective were speaking in the hallway about a case and how the CPU could assist. CPU officers, due to their strong relationships with residents, can access information that residents may not be willing to share with TPD officers with whom they do not share the same level of trust. CPU interviewees stressed the importance of having the right personnel in the CPU who are able to communicate effectively with people in the community and build relationships. Therefore, it will be important for TPD to continue monitoring the selection process for the CPU and COB to ensure that the right personnel are in those roles. While CIB and CPU/COB collaboration is a strength, there are some recommendations to further increase and institutionalize the collaboration which are presented in Section 2.2.5.

2.2   Recommendations for Strengthening TPD's Investigative Policies and Practices

Overall, TPD is a high-performing agency that is effective in investigating fatal and nonfatal shootings. This section describes a few recommendations, grounded in research and best practices, that can help build on TPD's existing investigative strengths. The assessment team can provide TPD with additional information and resources to assist in implementing these recommendations.

2.2.1   Strengthen the Response to Nonfatal Shootings

Interviewees throughout TPD expressed a desire to improve the agency's response to nonfatal shootings. They said that while homicide cases always receive a prompt and thorough investigation, both at the initial and follow-up stages, nonfatal shooting cases do not typically receive the same level of response. Sometimes detectives do not get involved in nonfatal shootings at all, with the bulk of the work done by patrol officers. In other cases, detectives from units such as Property Crimes or Fraud may be tasked with investigating nonfatal shootings, even if they do not have the experience or training to do so. Interviewees also reported that many nonfatal shooting cases get dropped completely if there is an uncooperative victim, which is often the case in Topeka.

These recommendations focus on strengthening the investigative response to nonfatal shooting cases, improving cooperation from nonfatal shooting victims, and/or pursuing cases even in the absence of victim cooperation. TPD should reinforce the message that it is taking nonfatal shootings seriously, especially given the link between nonfatal shootings and homicides.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="6">**Recommendation**</td><td>1</td><td>**Ensure that all nonfatal shooting cases are investigated by a detective trained in violent crime.**

TPD should review shifts and rotations to ensure that detectives are available to respond to nonfatal shooting cases. If a detective can't respond to the scene of a nonfatal shooting, the case should still go to a violent crime detective for the follow-up investigation. Assign nonfatal shooting cases quickly to avoid losing valuable evidence and leads Nonfatal shootings should be assigned to a detective for follow-up in all cases, regardless of whether there is a cooperative victim.

Additionally, structure CIB so detectives handling person crimes report to supervisors in the same area.</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>**Require detectives to contact victims of nonfatal shootings in person and encourage participation.**

Experience shows that detectives have a much better chance of gaining victim or witness participation through a face-to-face encounter, as opposed to contact over the telephone.</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>**Provide training to detectives on how to engage with victims, families, and potential witnesses involved in nonfatal shootings.**

One key reason for success for the Homicide Unit is the detectives' ability to build rapport with families and witnesses, which led to greater cooperation in cases. Interviewees said that this type of engagement has not been present in nonfatal shooting cases. To address this, TPD should provide formal and informal training to all detectives outside the Homicide Unit who might potentially work nonfatal shooting cases. This training should focus on how to take a trauma-informed approach to interviewing victims and families, communicating with victims who are hospitalized, and building relationships with victims, families, and witnesses. In addition to formal training, Homicide Unit detectives could provide informal training on how to successfully build rapport with victims and witnesses.</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>**Strengthen the victim advocacy capacity for nonfatal shooting cases.**

TPD should ensure there is a strong victim advocacy presence in nonfatal shooting cases. Interviews with community leaders indicated that improving victim support and services could help encourage greater victim participation in cases. See Section 2.2.2 for more detailed recommendations to expand victim advocacy services.</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>**Work with the Community Outreach Bureau to develop messaging on the importance of cooperating in shooting cases.**

The CIB and Community Outreach Bureau (COB) should work together to develop messaging that emphasizes how cooperating with nonfatal shooting cases can prevent future homicides. This messaging should be reinforced during COB outreach and detective interactions.</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>**Work with prosecutors to find strategies for moving forward with cases without victim cooperation.**

TPD and the DA's Office should find ways to pursue nonfatal cases without victim cooperation. They should focus on the importance of investigating and prosecuting cases regardless of the victim's status or involvement in criminal activity, and the importance of joint community engagement by police and prosecutors demonstrating a commitment to shooting cases and community safety regardless of victim status, to dispel perceptions that certain shooting cases are not taken seriously. Detectives and prosecutors should hold regular meetings to discuss any issues in the investigation and prosecution of these types of cases.</td></tr>
</table>

7	**Consider creating a unit dedicated to responding to violent crimes/gang crimes.** This unit would be focused on swiftly responding to violent crimes, including gun and gang violence. TPD apparently had a similar unit in the past, which interviewees said contributed to a drop in violent crime and homicide rates. The unit would rely on criminal intelligence to identify top offenders to target and would adopt a focused deterrence model. The unit could be staffed by personnel from various bureaus, including detectives, community outreach personnel, patrol, etc. The full-time unit would begin by focusing on the evening and nighttime hours, when many gun crimes occur.

2.2.2 Expand Victim Advocacy Services and Victim-Centered Practices

It is critical that police agencies address the needs of victims and families in a thorough, compassionate, and trauma-informed manner. A strong victim advocacy program can help prevent secondary victimization by law enforcement, facilitate increased victim and family participation in investigations, and demonstrate the agency's commitment to community response.[19]

TPD currently has one in-house Victim Advocate, funded by a grant that sets requirements and limitations on the role's responsibilities. The Victim Advocate primarily supports domestic violence cases and rarely assists detectives on fatal and nonfatal shootings, though interviewees expressed a strong interest in having the Victim Advocate be more involved in fatal and nonfatal shooting cases. Interviewees also noted that there are no standard protocols for information-sharing between detectives and the Victim Advocate on these cases. The Victim Advocate does not respond to crime scenes or participate in next-of-kin notifications.

The Victim Advocate created a packet that contains information about crime victim compensation, support resources, calendars to track court dates, the Victim Advocate's contact information, and other resources for victims and families. Detectives are supposed to distribute these packets to victims to help connect them to TPD's victim advocacy services.

Community interviewees suggested that TPD could do a better job of acknowledging the trauma experienced by residents affected by shooting incidents, even if no one was struck by gun fire. This includes how detectives and officers engage with victims and witnesses both on-scene and at the hospital. As such, TPD personnel may benefit from additional training around trauma-informed, victim-centered approaches. Healthcare-based community interviewees stated that sometimes gunshot wound victims do not have contact information for detectives or case numbers for their cases. In addition, several interviewees also stated that there is a stark difference between how detectives investigating sexual violence interact with victims as compared to those investigating gunshot incidents.

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[19] International Association of Chiefs of Police. (2023). *Law enforcement-based victim services: Key considerations.* https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/LEV/Publications/KeyConsiderations.pdf

<div style="transform: rotate(-90deg)">**Recommendation**</div>

8

Clarify the Victim Advocate's role and consider expanding advocacy services to fatal and nonfatal shooting victims/families.

TPD's current Victim Advocate may be restricted by the terms of the grant that funds the position. Before expanding the services, TPD should review the grant to ensure that any changes do not violate its terms.

If allowed under the grant, TPD should work with the Victim Advocate to identify opportunities to expand services to victims and families of fatal and nonfatal shooting. It may be most feasible to begin with homicide cases and later expand to nonfatal shootings. The Victim Advocate could assist with these cases by providing consistent updates and serving as a point of contact for victims and families, allowing detectives to focus on other investigative tasks. The Victim Advocate would also serve as a liaison between the families and detectives and could help answer questions about the criminal justice system and processes such as when or how families can retrieve a loved one's belongings.

If the current Victim Advocate cannot take on these additional services or if the workload is too high for one person, TPD should consider hiring an additional in-house advocate who is focused on assisting victims, witnesses, and families who are involved in fatal and nonfatal shootings. The CLEARS team can link TPD to peer sites that have implemented or expanded in-house victim advocacy efforts.

9

Take steps to promote collaboration between detectives and the Victim Advocate.

TPD should ensure strong coordination between investigators and the Victim Advocate to thoroughly and compassionately address the needs of victims, witnesses, and families. Strategies include the following:

- Include the Victim Advocate in the death notification process alongside the detectives and chaplain. Having a Victim Advocate present to assist with trauma-informed notifications can help decrease the risk of re-traumatization. It also serves as an opportunity to establish a connection between the family and the advocate.
- Develop protocols to ensure that the Victim Advocate and detectives take a collaborative approach when working with victims and their families. This approach should consider the goals of the advocate and detectives and should be based on strong communication and coordination.
- Have the Victim Advocate be present before and after victim/witness interviews. The victim advocate provided examples of cases where she has been the bridge between victims with information and investigators.
- Consider a policy requiring that detectives promptly provide the Victim Advocate with the contact information for shooting victims and families so that the Victim Advocate can reach out to them.

10	**Incorporate into written policies and SOPs the expectations for detective follow-up and communication with the families of homicide victims and with victims of nonfatal shootings. These expectations should be grounded in a victim-centered approach and emphasize that detectives should treat all victims and families with respect.** Policies and protocols should require detectives to: • Keep victims and their families informed about the investigation whenever possible. • Promptly respond to calls and emails from victims and families • Proactively reach out to victims and their families at regular intervals (e.g., monthly; victim's birthday, anniversary of the victim's murder), regardless of whether there are any case updates. In addition to providing support to victims' families, this type of outreach can improve perceptions of the police within communities and increase community participation in future investigations. Detectives should partner with the Victim Advocate to assist with this effort and take the burden off detectives, especially in cases where there are no new updates.
11	**Ensure the Victim Advocate is connected with internal and external partners who provide victim services.** TPD's Victim Advocate should have a relationship with CBOs that offer victim/family support, on-scene response, or both. The Victim Advocate should also connect with the local hospital's trauma department, which is currently offering support services for gunshot victims. Additionally, TPD should ensure that the Victim Advocate and agency Chaplain are connected and collaborating on response strategies.
12	**Support training for TPD personnel who interact with victims and families of shootings about trauma-informed practices. Trauma-informed practices have been shown to be instrumental in community engagement efforts.** • Consider training investigators and other community-facing personnel about how trauma affects the brain and body. This knowledge can help these staff understand why victims and witnesses are unable to recall details of an event or cannot communicate about an incident. It will also help them understand the behaviors of what they may perceive as "difficult victims/witnesses," which may be trauma related. • Consider required training for all investigators about trauma-informed interviewing techniques. Training should include role-playing scenarios. Expressions of emotions such as grief and reactions to trauma may vary across cultures and, therefore, officers should have culturally informed training. See, for example, the American Psychological Association's *Culturally Informed Trauma and Grief Recovery Toolkit*.[20] • Consider whether there are victim engagement practices used by investigators of sexual violence cases that can be modeled by CIB homicide and aggravated assault investigators.

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[20] American Psychological Association. (2023). *The culturally informed trauma and grief recovery toolkit.* https://www.apa.org/about/governance/president/grief-toolkit/culturally-informed-trauma.pdf

13	**Ensure detectives and officers are distributing the Victim Advocacy resource packets to victims and families. Be sure that when patrol officers and investigators engage with victims at the hospital, they are leaving contact information directly with victims or hospital staff so that victims can follow up as needed.** Without contact information and connection points, TPD may be losing opportunities to engage with victims in nonfatal shootings which could help with investigations. Further, when victims do not know who to reach out to, they do not have a feedback loop to know what is going on with their case which could send the message that TPD is not investigating or does not care to which can damage community perceptions.

2.2.3 Strengthen Detective Training

All new detectives, regardless of their assigned unit, should receive basic investigations training that provides the knowledge and skills needed to work general investigations (Carter, 2013; Police Executive Research Forum [PERF] and the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2018). The training can help ensure that detectives selected into a detective bureau are well-versed in fundamental investigative techniques. Detectives who investigate, or who may potentially investigate, homicide and nonfatal shooting cases should receive additional advanced training in the skills and techniques necessary to work complex violent crime cases.

The assessment team found that new detectives do not consistently receive formal training on basic investigative skills, and that most detective training comes through informal mentoring and field training.

Recommendation		
	14	**Ensure that all new detectives and detective supervisors attend a basic detective training course.** The training must be consistent for all new detectives and should cover all aspects of an investigation. At a minimum, basic detective training should include the following: • Crime scene response, management, and processing • Evidence recovery and submission • Report writing • Writing and executing warrants • Investigative follow-up actions • Case prosecution • Courtroom procedures • Relevant laws and RPD policies The CLEARS team can work with TPD to help identify training courses and curricula that best meet the department's needs.

15 | **Ensure that detectives who investigate homicides and nonfatal shootings, as well as their supervisors, receive advanced training in investigating these types of cases.**

This training should be consistent and required for all detectives who may potentially be called out to investigate a homicide or nonfatal shooting, regardless of their current assignment.

Specialized in-service training should cover topics that include but are not limited to:

- Advanced interview and interrogation techniques
- Crime scene response and management
- Next-of-kin notifications
- Developing witnesses
- Interview and interrogation
- Conducting follow-up investigations
- Forensic analysis of seized evidence
- Using digital evidence from cell phones, laptops, tablets, and other devices
- Using social media in investigations
- Using crime analysis to assist with investigations
- Using network analysis to identify linkages between individuals or groups
- Constitutional law
- Prosecuting a homicide or nonfatal shooting case
- Using recordings made in jail/prison
- Investigating deaths involving infants
- Mass casualty investigations
- Advanced DNA methods

The CLEARS team can work with TPD to help identify training courses and curricula that best meet the department's needs.

2.2.4 Maximize the Crime Analysis and Intelligence Capabilities

TPD currently has two civilian crime analysts (one of whom is a supervisor) who are located within the Executive Bureau. The Crime Intelligence Unit, located in CIB, includes one sergeant and a detective who operate out of the RTCC, which is also staffed by SCSO personnel.

Interviewees said that there is limited coordination between the crime analysts and detectives on fatal and nonfatal shooting cases. Although crime analysts can support investigations by developing genealogy charts and searching social media, they typically do not get involved in shooting cases unless detectives request specific information. The assessment team found that TPD is underutilizing its crime analysts' capabilities when it comes to assisting with fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations. One reason for this is that detectives may not be aware of the kinds of services the analysts could provide. There also appears to be a lack of feedback and communication between investigators and analysts.

Currently, the Crime Intelligence Unit has two primary functions: maintaining the RTCC and generating information to locate and identify suspects. They typically do not perform case-specific intelligence work or provide intelligence information to detectives working fatal and nonfatal shooting cases; instead, detectives handle this work themselves.

16	**Consider creating a single Crime Analysis & Intelligence Unit that is part of the RTCC.** Creating a single unit combining crime analysts and intelligence personnel would improve coordination and information sharing, eliminate overlapping functions, and strengthen the capability for producing case-specific intelligence in fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations. The unit could also track gang and violent crime activity as part of a larger focused deterrence effort. If such a unit is created, TPD should ensure that it is governed by written policies and SOPs that clearly define: • The unit's mission and purpose • The specific roles and responsibilities of each position within the unit • The unit's chain of command • Procedures for providing support to violent crime investigations • The relevant laws and policies applicable to intelligence gathering • Specific products or deliverables expected of the unit
17	**Take steps to fully leverage crime analysts and intelligence personnel in fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations.** TPD should maximize the contributions of crime analysts and intelligence personnel. With the right tools and access, they can conduct social media and background research, gather and analyze intelligence, perform linkage analysis on cases, create linkage charts using an analysis of NIBIN hits, etc. Their involvement would allow detectives to focus on other investigative tasks. Strategies for better integrating crime analysts and intelligence personnel into fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations include: • Requiring CIB detectives to consult with the crime analyst and/or intelligence personnel at the outset of homicide and nonfatal shooting investigations. This requirement should be included in CIB policies and procedures. • Inviting crime analysts and intelligence personnel to officer and detective trainings and roll calls to present information about their roles, capabilities, and ways they can assist with investigations. • Ensuring that a crime analyst and intelligence personnel attend all case briefings/roundtables, weekly violent crime meetings, etc. so they can share insights and remain informed about ongoing cases. • Encouraging open communication between detectives and analysts by reassuring detectives that it is appropriate and secure to share case information. • Ensuring that crime analysts and intelligence personnel get access to all up-to-date homicide and nonfatal shooting case files. • Reviewing the policies and procedures governing crime analysts and intelligence personnel to ensure that they accurately reflect their roles and capabilities; if no such policies and procedures exist, TPD should develop them. • Ensure that detectives provide feedback about the usefulness of the analysis/intelligence products they receive, so that adaptations can be made if needed.

18	**Consider routing NIBIN hits and intelligence packets through the Crime Analysis Unit or Crime Intelligence Unit.** This would ensure analysts are included in NIBIN leads so that they can potentially provide new information. This would also allow analysts to build an internal database of NIBIN leads for tactical and strategic analysis. Crime analysts would be able to use this information to identify trends across space and time that detectives may not recognize. Currently, NIBIN leads are summarized by the ATF contractor and routed to detectives, but not to crime analysts or intelligence personnel.
19	**Reinstate the ACISS computer system.** Several interviewees said that the ACISS system, which TPD used to have, was an effective tool to gather and store criminal intelligence. The assessment team learned that TPD is planning to reinstate the ACISS system, which appears to be a positive move towards improving the agency's intelligence capabilities.
20	**Ensure that crime analysts and intelligence officers receive up-to-date training, certifications, and tools.** Interviewees said that crime analysts and intelligence personnel receive very little formal training upon joining the unit. TPD should assess the training needs of crime analysts and intelligence personnel and strive to provide the training when possible. One example is training in Risk Terrain Modeling (RTM), a useful tool that analysts currently do not receive training on. Interviewees recommended exploring Clearview, a facial recognition tool that could significantly reduce time spent on facial identification.

2.2.5 Strengthen Community Engagement and Collaboration between the COB/CPU and CIB

The assessment team identified several ways in which TPD could strengthen its engagement with the community to build trust and increase the community's willingness to participate in investigations. Those recommendations, which include strengthening partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) are detailed in Section 3 of this report. Recommendations specific to strengthening the collaboration between the COB/CPU and CIB are below.

Recommendation	21	**Strengthen coordination between the Community Outreach Bureau (COB), Community Policing Unit (CPO) and detectives working fatal and nonfatal shooting cases in the Criminal Investigations Bureau (CIB).** COB personnel, including community policing officers (CPOs), often receive information from community members that could aid shooting investigations. Interviewees said that COB and CIB have a good working relationship and often share information; however, implementing formal information-sharing strategies would improve coordination. For example, COB members should be invited to attend violent crime briefings, and consulting CPOs should be included in detectives' investigative task checklists (see Recommendations in Section 2.2.6). Currently, outreach between COB/CPU and CIB occurs informally. If communications between Bureaus and units were institutionalized, the COB would act as a force multiplier for investigations.

22	**Increase staffing in the CPU, or if not possible at the moment, do not decrease staffing levels any further.** The CPU is operating with three CPO and two sergeants. The CPU expressed that additional staffing would allow officers to spend more time building relationships and engaging in proactive activities. Further, CPU interviewees expressed a desire to spend more time out of their cars in the community and engaging with the community in problem-solving. These types of activities, if adequately staffed, will likely build community trust with TPD more generally and provide residents with a specific trusted point-of-contact should they have information for investigative purposes.

2.2.6 Strengthen and Formalize Internal Coordination and Communication

Collaboration and communication between various units can be critical to an effective violent crime investigation.[21] Members of different units may have pertinent information to share about suspects, witnesses, or leads, and this information can be lost without strong coordination.

The assessment team found that, overall, there is good communication and coordination between detectives and other units and personnel involved in shooting investigations. However, some of TPD's success in this area relies on the experience of veteran detectives, particularly those in the Homicide Unit, who have built strong working relationships and possess deep institutional knowledge. TPD must be prepared to maintain this level of coordination as staffing changes occur.

This section provides recommendations for formalizing and institutionalizing internal communication and coordination so that resources are leveraged no matter who is currently serving in various positions.

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[21] Wellford, C. F. (2018). Organizing for effective homicide investigations. National Police Foundation. https://centerforimprovinginvestigations.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Organizing-for-Effective-Homicide-Investigations-Wellford-May-2018-NRTAC.pdf

Develop a comprehensive, user-friendly manual for the CIB that includes all relevant policies, checklists, and other written materials that govern responsibilities related to homicide and nonfatal shooting investigations.

The purpose of the manual is to provide detailed direction for all units and individuals at TPD who are involved in fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations, including but not limited to 911 call takers, first officer(s) on the scene, patrol officers and supervisors, detectives and their supervisors, forensics personnel, support units, crime analysts, and victim assistance personnel. The assessment team recommends developing separate manuals for homicide investigations and nonfatal shooting investigations.[22]

The manual should be organized into clearly marked sections and include a table of contents. It should address both the initial response and the follow-up investigation and should include specific duties and responsibilities for each member involved. It should also include an investigative checklist of essential tasks that officers and detectives must consider or complete when investigating each crime type.

The manual and checklists should address topics that include but are not limited to:
- Timelines and specific duties and responsibilities for each member involved in these investigations, including step-by-step instructions for investigators at each phase.
- Protocols for case assignment and scheduling, including detective call-out to scenes.
- The initial incident response, including actions taken by the 911 call taker, first officer(s) on the scene, lead investigator, supervisors, and other departmental units. Instructions should cover canvassing for physical evidence and videos at the scene.
- Protocols for next-of-kin notification, which should be trauma-informed and victim-centered.
- Policies and protocols related to the follow-up investigation, including but not limited to attending autopsies, developing and following up with witnesses, taking witness and suspect statements, and recovering and submitting physical and digital evidence.
- Specific guidelines for engaging with victims and families, including procedures for: developing a communication plan, developing timelines for initial and follow-up communications, providing case status updates, making required notifications and contacts with victims and their families, documenting contacts with victims and their families, and collaborating with TPD victim advocates. Procedures should require detectives to inform victims' families about the victim advocate position and provide the advocate's contact information.
- Policies for communicating and sharing information with internal units (e.g., patrol officers, crime analysts, forensics personnel, community policing officers, digital evidence personnel, victim advocates) and external partners (e.g., prosecutors, crime labs, task forces, community and victim advocacy groups).
- Case documentation and case file requirements.
- The use of traditional and social media, including protocols for releasing video footage to the public.
- Policies and protocols for investigating specific types of homicides and nonfatal shootings, including mass shootings, infant deaths, suspicious deaths, officer-involved shootings, and cold cases.
- Investigating cold cases.
- Mandated case reviews, including the timeline and expectations for review.
- Supervisor duties and responsibilities, including requirements for holding regular, formal case reviews.
- Sample forms, reports, and warrants, among other documents, with guidance on how to fill them out.

Each detective should be provided with a copy of the manual upon joining TPD and be trained on its contents. The goal of the manual is to serve as a resource to facilitate a comprehensive, thorough, and consistent investigative process and as clear guidance for agency expectations and accountability.

Manuals should be reviewed and updated every 3-5 years to ensure that the policies and procedures are up to date.

[22] TPD could obtain some sample manuals, policies, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) from other police departments to provide guidance on creating policies and practices that are consistent with best practices, TPD's departmental regulations, and state and federal laws. The CLEARS team can assist with this. In formulating the manual, it is important to obtain input from detectives, supervisors, attorneys, and all other stakeholders. This will ensure that the SOP correctly addresses all necessary considerations and will also ensure that stakeholders buy into the SOP protocols.

24	**Hold an internal weekly violent crime meeting that includes representatives from throughout the agency.**
	CIB should hold a weekly violent crime meeting to discuss the city's most recent serious crimes from the previous 7 days. Each murder, nonfatal shooting case, and any other prioritized violent crime should be presented by the lead detective(s) and then discussed among the group to gain information and intelligence, develop leads, and ensure that detectives have the resources and support necessary to move their investigations forward.
	Participants in the meeting should include CIB detectives who are involved in the cases being presented; CIB supervisors, and command; CSIs; victim advocates; crime analysts; Criminal Intelligence Unit personnel; patrol representatives; community policing officers; prosecutors, and other local and federal partners. If an investigation is potentially related to another jurisdiction, that agency should also be invited to attend the meeting. When appropriate, additional guests such as medical examiners, crime scene investigation (CSI) experts, or community group leaders could be invited to discuss their areas of expertise.
25	**Strengthen formal information-sharing protocols between detectives and patrol officers beyond the initial crime scene response.**
	Examples of ways to strengthen coordination between detectives and patrol include:
	• Ensure detectives attend roll calls on a regular basis to share information about ongoing homicide and nonfatal shooting cases. A detective should be mandated to attend roll call after every homicide in order to brief officers and request assistance. This should occur even in closed cases, as patrol officers should be aware of potential retaliation factors.
	• Continue having detectives conduct trainings at roll call on investigative tasks such as interviewing and crime scene processing.
	• Require detectives to follow up with patrol officers who submit a supplemental report in a case. This step should be part of the investigative checklist (see Recommendation 23) and case review process (see Recommendation 20).
26	**Strengthen communication and collaboration between detectives and crime analysts/intelligence personnel as detailed in Section 2.2.4.**
27	**Reinstate the shift recap prepared by the Watch Commander.**
	The assessment team learned that TPD previously did a recap at the end of each shift that touched upon the highlights of what happened during that shift. This is a good way to ensure that members are aware of what is going on and can better share information with one another. TPD should explore reinstating this recap.

28

Implement a formal, systematic case review process between detectives working shooting investigations and their sergeants.

Supervisors should continue to meet frequently and informally with detectives to discuss ongoing cases and check in on the detectives' progress. However, this practice should be supplemented with a more formal, systematic case review.

A case review involves a thorough review of the entire case file, along with a conversation with the detective to determine which tasks have been addressed and which ones are outstanding, to brainstorm leads and prioritize next steps, and to ensure that all investigative work has been documented. Simply asking a detective to give an update on the status of an investigation is not a case review.

For example, the case review protocol may require that a sergeant ensure the following steps have been taken at the end of 15 days following a case assignment:

- Previous investigative steps have been completed.
- Unresolved investigative steps are modified for completion.
- Further investigative steps are prioritized.
- All pertinent locations have been canvassed.
- Further inquiry has been made about any evidence not yet processed (e.g., firearms, fingerprints, trace data).
- Available outside resources and partnerships (community, federal, task forces, etc.) have been used to the appropriate degree.
- All witness interviews and other investigative efforts have been documented.
- Contact has been made with the victim's family and friends to update them on the case.

The primary goal of a case review is to ensure that all investigative leads are addressed and documented and that a thorough investigation has been completed. A secondary goal is to hold detectives accountable and ensure that they follow protocol. Case reviews will also help identify training needs for individual detectives and possibly an entire unit. All case reviews should be well-documented and include details on the investigative plan of action.

Sergeants should conduct an official case review within 30 days of case assignment. After 60–90 days, open cases should also receive a thorough review by the lieutenant and be presented to all detective personnel and command staff. This will allow for additional ideas and help command staff really understand the investigative capabilities and needs.

The case review requirements and guidelines should be stated in written policy.

2.2.7 Address Physical and Digital Evidence Challenges

Although TPD generally does a good job with processing, analyzing, and using physical and digital evidence in shooting investigations, the assessment team identified a few areas where additional resources or strategies could be beneficial.

Recommendation	29	**Explore additional training opportunities for CSIs.** The assessment team learned that CSIs do not always receive consistent training outside of the basic 40-hour crime scene training class. There is no mandated ongoing training, and due to budget issues, it has been hard to get approval for training requests. TPD should explore cost-effective training opportunities to ensure that CSIs are up to date on the latest forensics tools, technologies, skills, etc. Some forensics personnel have attended training through the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI), and TPD should continue utilizing this and other area resources.
	30	**Expand the digital evidence unit.** As discussed earlier in this report, the assessment team found that the digital evidence team has provided a benefit to shooting investigations. In order to keep up with the volume of work it receives, the digital evidence unit could use another Cellebrite machine and additional staff to help process evidence.
	31	**Ensure that firearms tracing is done regularly and consistently.** Interviewees said that firearms tracing through eTrace is not always done on a regular or consistent basis. TPD should take steps to ensure that this process is performed for crime guns received by the agency.
	32	**Continue taking steps to address challenges with digital evidence storage and sharing.** Several interviewees discussed ongoing challenges with managing and sharing the large volume of digital evidence. One issue is ensuring that prosecutors are able to access up-to-date files and evidence.. The assessment team learned that TPD and the DA's Office are working collaboratively to address this problem, and that TPD has been spearheading an effort to transition its digital evidence server to a more responsive system. TPD should continue these efforts.

2.3   Case File Review Findings

Reviewing and coding the investigative case narratives of fatal and nonfatal shootings enabled the assessment team to evaluate aspects of each shooting, the agency's response, follow-up investigative actions, and case outcomes. Case narratives for a random sample of 33 fatal shooting incidents, 48 nonfatal shooting incidents, and 13 incidents involving both fatal and nonfatal shootings were provided to RTI International for the years 2018–2023. Because agencies typically prioritize murder investigations over nonfatal shooting investigations and may apply distinct resources to each, we grouped the cases involving both a fatal and nonfatal shooting with fatal-only cases and compared them to nonfatal-only incidents.

RTI and TPD had a data use agreement in place that met the data security standards of both RTI and TPD, and RTI adhered to this agreement when storing and accessing case files for review and analysis. Members of the assessment team reviewed the case narratives to understand TPD's response to each type of shooting and to extract over 100 variables on the shooting and agency response from each case. It's important to note that if case narratives lacked documentation of key activities or outcomes, the findings may reflect gaps in documentation rather than actual investigative practices. Tables 1 and 2 provide summary statistics for key attributes related to the crime and agency response, respectively, measured from the case file data. Key information was extracted from the case narratives and coded

using a set of predetermined data metrics. The data collection instrument and codebook used to code investigative case files are available to TPD or its partners upon request.

Table 1. Incident Characteristics, by Type of Shooting

Incident Characteristic	Shooting	
	Nonfatal	Fatal
Total number of cases reviewed	48	46
Number of guns fired		
1	29 (60%)	30 (65%)
2	12 (25%)	10 (22%)
More than 2	6 (13%)	6 (13%)
Unknown	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Type of gun used[a]		
Handgun	32 (67%)	32 (70%)
Rifle	6 (13%)	5 (11%)
Shotgun	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	16 (33%)	13 (28%)
Median number of rounds fired	4	6
Location of shooting		
Street/outdoors	30 (63%)	21 (46%)
Inside residence	10 (21%)	10 (22%)
Other	7 (15%)	14 (30%)
Unknown	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Any victims armed		
No	37 (77%)	34 (74%)
Yes	3 (6%)	10 (22%)
Unknown	8 (17%)	2 (4%)
Number of victims		
1	39 (81%)	32 (70%)
2	5 (10%)	7 (15%)
More than 2	4 (8%)	7 (15%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Number of suspects at time of initial response		
0	6 (13%)	6 (13%)
1	20 (42%)	19 (41%)
2	9 (19%)	10 (22%)
More than 2	8 (16%)	7 (15%)
Unknown	5 (10%)	4 (9%)
Number of suspects at end of investigation		
1	25 (52%)	24 (52%)
2	10 (21%)	10 (22%)

Incident Characteristic	Shooting	
	Nonfatal	Fatal
More than 2	9 (19%)	9 (19%)
Unknown	3 (6%)	0 (0%)
Victim sex[a]		
Male	38 (79%)	37 (80%)
Female	14 (29%)	15 (33%)
Victim race[a]		
Black	42 (88%)	38 (83%)
White	4 (8%)	5 (11%)
Hispanic	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
Other	0 (0%)	3 (7%)
Median victim age (years)	25	25
Final suspect sex[a]		
Male	32 (67%)	39 (85%)
Female	2 (4%)	2 (4%)
Final suspect race[a]		
Black	28 (58%)	36 (78%)
White	2 (4%)	3 (7%)
Hispanic	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Other	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Unknown	17 (35%)	6 (13%)
Median final suspect age (years)	20	23
Primary relationship between victims and offenders		
Current/former intimate partner	2 (4%)	
Family member	1 (2%)	6 (13%)
Friend/acquaintance	16 (33%)	16 (35%)
Stranger	14 (29%)	5 (11%)
Rival gang/clique member	0 (0%)	8 (17%)
Other relationship	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	15 (31%)	7 (15%)
Primary motive for shooting		
Domestic abuse	2 (4%)	5 (11%)
Rivalry over lover	3 (6%)	1 (2%)
Conflict over money	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
Drug-related	4 (8%)	3 (7%)
Gang-related	1 (2%)	9 (20%)
Robbery	2 (4%)	3 (7%)
Shot inadvertently	4 (8%)	4 (9%)
Other[b]	12 (25%)	9 (20%)
Unknown	19 (40%)	10 (22%)

Incident Characteristic	Shooting	
	Nonfatal	Fatal
Distance		
Close range/point blank	16 (33%)	20 (43%)
From a distance (from vehicle)	18 (38%)	13 (28%)
From a distance (on foot)	6 (13%)	6 (13%)
From a distance (unknown origin)	4 (8%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	4 (8%)	7 (15%)
Clearance status[c]		
Open/inactive	23 (48%)	14 (30%)
Cleared by arrest or exceptional means	25 (52%)	32 (70%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

a. Response options are not mutually exclusive so values may sum to greater than 100%.
b. "Other" includes a wide variety of motivations including retaliation, the result of an ongoing conflict, or road rage.
c. Clearance status (i.e., whether the case was open, inactive, closed by arrest, or closed by exceptional means) was determined from dispositions within case files. For cases with an "Unknown" clearance status, the disposition could not be determined from the case files provided.

Table 2. Response Characteristics, by Type of Shooting

Response Characteristic	Shooting	
	Nonfatal	Fatal
Total number of cases reviewed	48	46
Number of patrol officers who responded to scene		
0	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
1–4	12 (25%)	2 (4%)
5–9	11 (23%)	13 (28%)
10+	23 (48%)	31 (67%)
Unknown	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
Patrol supervisor present at scene		
No	23 (48%)	2 (4%)
Yes	22 (46%)	44 (96%)
Unknown	3 (6%)	0 (0%)
Number of detectives who responded to scene		
0	21 (44%)	0 (0%)
1	8 (17%)	4 (9%)
2	7 (15%)	14 (30%)
3	3 (6%)	11 (24%)
4	0 (0%)	11 (24%)
5+	2 (4%)	5 (11%)
Unknown	7 (15%)	1 (2%)
Investigative supervisor present at scene		

No	35 (73%)	26 (57%)
Yes	5 (10%)	18 (39%)
Unknown	8 (17%)	2 (4%)
Evidence collected at scene		
No	4 (8%)	0 (0%)
Yes	44 (92%)	46 (100%)
Type of evidence collected at scene[a]		
Bullets	20 (42%)	30 (65%)
Casing	38 (79%)	40 (87%)
Clothing	15 (31%)	37 (80%)
Digital	18 (38%)	32 (70%)
DNA/bodily fluids	37 (77%)	44 (96%)
Drugs	3 (6%)	18 (39%)
Electronics	12 (25%)	39 (85%)
Latent prints	22 (46%)	35 (76%)
Pattern evidence	3 (6%)	1 (2%)
Trace evidence	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Suspect firearm	14 (29%)	15 (33%)
Other	7 (15%)	8 (17%)
Victim statement obtained		
No or not applicable	1 (2%)	32 (70%)
Yes	4 (8%)	2 (4%)
Unknown	43 (90%)	12 (26%)
Victim participated/cooperated in investigation during initial response		
No or not applicable	21 (44%)	7 (15%)
Yes	24 (50%)	5 (11%)
Unknown	3 (6%)	34 (74%)
Number of third-party witnesses		
0	17 (35%)	5 (11%)
1	11 (23%)	5 (11%)
2	13 (27%)	13 (28%)
3	2 (4%)	8 (17%)
4+	5 (10%)	15 (33%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Witness statement obtained		
No or not applicable	17 (35%)	6 (13%)
Yes	30 (63%)	40 (87%)
Unknown	1 (2%)	0 (0%)

(continued)

Table 2. Response Characteristics, by Type of Shooting (continued)

Response Characteristic	Shooting	
	Nonfatal	Fatal
Witness participated/cooperated in investigation during initial response		
No or not applicable	2 (4%)	7 (15%)
Yes	28 (58%)	35 (76%)
Unknown	18 (38%)	4 (9%)
A suspect identified at time of response		
No	25 (52%)	16 (35%)
Yes	23 (48%)	30 (65%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Suspect identification at time of response[a]		
Police identified	15 (31%)	17 (37%)
Victim or witness identified	10 (21%)	18 (39%)
Other identification	4 (8%)	6 (13%)
Identifying information on a suspect vehicle at time of response		
No	36 (75%)	31 (67%)
Yes	12 (25%)	15 (33%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Scene was canvassed at time of response		
No	5 (10%)	1 (2%)
Yes, by both patrol and detective	7 (15%)	25 (54%)
Yes, by detective	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Yes, by patrol	36 (75%)	19 (41%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Number of days until first detective activity		
0	22 (46%)	43 (93%)
1	5 (10%)	3 (7%)
2	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3+	8 (17%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	13 (27%)	0 (0%)
Investigator(s) contacted victim(s)		
No or not applicable	21 (44%)	33 (72%)
Yes	19 (40%)	12 (26%)
In person	17 (35%)	1 (2%)
Not in person	3 (6%)	12 (26%)
Unknown	8 (17%)	1 (2%)

(continued)

Table 2. Response Characteristics, by Type of Shooting (continued)

Response Characteristic	Shooting	
	Nonfatal	Fatal
Victim participated/cooperated in investigation after initial unwillingness to		
No or not applicable	42 (77%)	33 (72%)
Yes	2 (4%)	5 (11%)
Unknown	4 (8%)	8 (17%)
Detective contacted third-party witnesses identified at scene		
No or not applicable	28 (58%)	3 (7%)
Yes	10 (21%)	43 (93%)
In person	11 (23%)	43 (93%)
Not in person	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Unknown	10 (21%)	0 (0%)
Witness participated/cooperated in investigation after initial unwillingness to		
No or not applicable	37 (77%)	36 (78%)
Yes	0 (0%)	7 (15%)
Unknown	11 (23%)	3 (7%)
Initial leads on motive		
No	26 (54%)	22 (48%)
Yes	22 (46%)	24 (52%)
Confidential informant(s) came forward with information		
No	47 (98%)	35 (76%)
Yes	1 (2%)	11 (24%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Specialized unit(s) helped with investigation[a]		
Fugitive	3 (6%)	8 (17%)
Gang/Narcotics	1 (2%)	4 (9%)
Real time	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Intelligence/Fusion	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
Crime analysis	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Crime lab	34 (71%)	44 (96%)
Victim advocate	0 (0%)	3 (7%)
Street crimes unit	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Other	5 (10%)	19 (41%)

Table 2. Response Characteristics, by Type of Shooting (continued)

Response Characteristic	Shooting	
	Nonfatal	Fatal
External resources/partners helped with investigation[a]		
Federal law enforcement	3 (6%)	15 (33%)
Local/state law enforcement	4 (8%)	10 (22%)
Regional fusion/intelligence center	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Crime lab	34 (71%)	44 (96%)
Community- or faith-based organization	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Public tip line	0 (0%)	7 (15%)
Other	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
Technologies used in investigation[a]		
Hidden recording device	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
License plate reader	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Facial recognition	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Social network data	8 (17%)	18 (39%)
Gunshot detection	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Firearm/toolmark identification	20 (42%)	27 (59%)
Gun trace	10 (21%)	10 (22%)
Digital data	6 (13%)	27 (59%)
International Mobile Subscriber Identity (IMSI)-catcher	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Cell phone location	5 (10%)	25 (54%)
Vehicle computer data	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Social media	10 (21%)	25 (54%)
Other	6 (13%)	9 (20%)
Search warrant executed		
No	32 (70%)	5 (11%)
Yes	14 (30%)	41 (89%)
Community group/leader asked to help with investigation		
No	47 (100%)	36 (78%)
Yes	0 (0%)	10 (22%)
Investigator made further contact with patrol officer(s) who responded to scene?		
No	41 (85%)	40 (87%)
Yes	2 (4%)	6 (13%)
Unknown	5 (10%)	0 (0%)

(continued)

Table 2. Response Characteristics, by Type of Shooting (continued)

Response Characteristic	Shooting	
	Nonfatal	Fatal
Scene was canvassed at a later time		
No	40 (83%)	24 (52%)
Yes, by both patrol and detective	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
Yes, by detective	4 (8%)	16 (35%)
Yes, by patrol	0 (0%)	4 (9%)
Unknown	3 (6%)	0 (0%)
Suspect interviewed by an investigator		
No	28 (58%)	19 (41%)
Yes	13 (27%)	25 (54%)
Unknown	7 (15%)	2 (4%)
Suspect confessed to the crime		
No	33 (69%)	28 (61%)
Yes	7 (15%)	16 (35%)
Unknown	8 (17%)	2 (4%)

a. Response options are not mutually exclusive so values may sum to greater than 100%.

As shown in Tables 1 and 2, the sample of fatal and nonfatal shooting cases reviewed by the Project CLEARS team exhibited similar case characteristics yet differed in several characteristics related to TPD's initial response and follow-up investigation. Notably, as shown in Table 2, fatal shootings received a more robust investigative response than nonfatal shootings. For example, among the 46 fatal shootings reviewed here, at least five patrol officers responded to the scene in 96% of cases compared to 75% of the time for nonfatal shootings. . A patrol supervisor was present at the scene of fatal shootings more often than nonfatal shootings (96% of cases versus 46% of cases, respectively). Multiple detectives responded to the scene of 90% of the fatal shootings reviewed but only 25% of the nonfatal shootings. No detectives responded to the scene of 21 nonfatal shootings reviewed. Other differences included the types of evidence typically collected at the scene, technologies leveraged in the investigation, and whether detectives contacted witnesses identified at the scene, among other aspects.

In addition to the findings in Tables 1 and 2, RTI documented, for each case, the investigative components that appeared to contribute to case clearance, as well as those that may have generated additional leads for the cases that weren't cleared. Among the 25 cleared nonfatal shootings, witness/victim cooperation, a quick response to the scene, suspect vehicle information, audiovisual data, and cell phone data most often contributed to clearing the case by arrest or exceptional means. Among the 32 cleared fatal shootings, witness/victim cooperation, audiovisual data, suspect vehicle information, cellphone data, a quick response, and social media intelligence most often contributed to case clearance. Among the 48 nonfatal shootings, in 30 cases (62%) there appeared to be investigative components that might have generated new leads if they had received additional investigative attention. These components included further witness/victim follow-up, further suspect follow-up, appealing to the public for information, and the use of technology. Among the 46 fatal shootings, in 14 cases (30%) there appeared to be investigative components that might have generated new leads if they had received

additional investigative attention. These components included further witness/victim follow-up, further suspect follow-up, appealing to the public for information, and use of technology.

Recommendation	33	**Investigative components associated with case clearance for nonfatal shootings should be considered to inform improvement or enhancement of TPD's response to nonfatal shootings.** Increasing the robustness of the response and investigative follow-up for nonfatal shootings may lead to increased case closure, though it is understandable that law enforcement agencies lack personnel and resource capacity to respond to nonfatal shootings with the same level of effort as fatal shootings. Therefore, TPD should consider those investigative components associated with successful case clearance to prioritize the components they would like to enhance. For example, victim/witness cooperation is associated with successful case clearance, yet follow-up contact with victims and witnesses is low and may not always be done in person. Follow-up contact attempts should be increased with in-person contact prioritized. Continue to rely on community groups or consider establishing an in-house victim advocate position to assist with shooting investigations.

3. Perceived Level of LEA Engagement With the Community

This section is organized according to the Typology of Community Engagement for Policing (Figure 1). Community engagement is important for building trust with the community (both residents and CBOs), which, in turn, can increase the likelihood of community participation in investigations. As shown in Figure 1, an LEA's level of community engagement can be described as a pyramid with five levels. As community engagement increases, there is greater community voice, more shared decision-making power between the community and law enforcement, and increased collaboration between community and law enforcement. The base level of the pyramid is Information/Reassurance. At this base level, the LEA provides information to the community; information-sharing is one way. As the level of community engagement increases, information-sharing by the community to law enforcement also increases. The next levels are Monitoring/Accountability, Strategic Consultation, and Partnership/Cooperation. The top of the pyramid is Empowerment. At this highest level, the community takes ownership of identifying issues of concern and driving decision-making about strategies, with law enforcement support, to address those issues. Ideally, TPD's community engagement strategies could help move the community up to the level of Empowerment (where appropriate)—that is, to actively involve CBOs and community residents in leadership and decision-making in gun violence response and prevention. Each level of community engagement is described in more detail throughout the report.

Although this report is not specifically about community policing, it is important to acknowledge that many recommendations in this report would be characterized as successful community policing practices, which are informed by experts, practitioners, and relevant research in the field. Successful community policing elements include trust, transparency, and a willingness from both law enforcement and the community to

engage in dialogue and collaborative decision-making.[23,24,25] The term "community engagement" will be used throughout this section, and recommendations will draw from effective police–community engagement practices.

Figure 1. Typology of Community Engagement for Policing

Typology adapted from Myhill, A. (2012). Community engagement in policing: Lessons from the literature. National Policing Improvement Agency. https://typeset.io/papers/community-engagement-in-policing-lessons-from-the-literature-25d0wiez19. See also the International Association for Public Participation. (2018). IAP2 spectrum of public participation. https://iap2.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2018_IAP2_Spectrum.pdf

3.1   Information and Reassurance

At the base of the community engagement pyramid is the Information/Reassurance level. At this level, the emphasis is on communication going out from the LEA to the community, delivered in an effective, accessible, easy-to-understand way. At this basic level, TPD would share information with the community using a variety of communication methods and channels to make sure that the community is aware of TPD's initiatives, events, and priorities related to gun violence. CBO interviewees and community residents described the ways in which TPD communicates with them or their group and the frequency and content of communication. CBO leaders and community residents cited barriers to receiving information from TPD and had suggestions to improve information-sharing. Similarly, TPD respondents described the ways in which TPD shares information with the community and their concerns about getting information to all community members.

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[23] Fridell, L., & Wycoff, M. A. (Eds.). (2004). *Community policing: The past, present, and future.* Police Executive Research Forum, The Annie E. Casey Foundation. https://www.policeforum.org/assets/docs/Free_Online_Documents/Community_Policing/community%20policing%20-%20the%20past%20present%20and%20future%202004.pdf
[24] Myhill, A. (2012). *Community engagement in policing: Lessons from the literature.* National Policing Improvement Agency. https://typeset.io/papers/community-engagement-in-policing-lessons-from-the-literature-25d0wiez19
[25] Also see Lansing, A. E., Romero, N. J., Siantz, E., Silva, V., Center, K., Casteel, & Gilmer, T. (2023). Building trust: Leadership reflections on community empowerment and engagement in a large urban initiative. *BMC Public Health, 23*(1), Article 1252. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-15860-z

3.1.1 Findings and Recommendations: Law Enforcement Information-Sharing

Findings

Community perceptions of TPD's communication with the community varied. While CBO leaders reported generally positive relationships with TPD, nearly everyone stated their perceptions and experiences with TPD as leaders of organizations differed from the perceptions of residents more generally. A great deal of community mistrust of TPD was perceived by CBO leaders, largely due to residents' negative past experiences and recent officer-involved shootings.

CBO leaders stated that they have open communications with TPD, but all expressed that TPD leadership dictates how open the agency will be with information-sharing. Most CBO leaders expressed enthusiasm for the new chief, hoping that TPD's community engagement efforts will increase under his leadership.

Most CBO leaders satisfied with TPD's information-sharing stated that they have direct access to someone within TPD with whom they communicate. Specifically, those relationships were with the chief, command staff, and community police officers (CPOs). Interviewees from Stormont Vail Health had more direct interactions with patrol officers and detectives than CBO interviewees from other organizations.

Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA) meetings were an often mentioned as a method by which TPD shares information directly with the community. Topeka has 20 NIAs. CPOs typically attend NIA meetings to provide updates on recent crime trends, which the community finds valuable. One community interviewee said that their CPO attends monthly and brings a printed information packet for attendees. CPOs have access to LexisNexis to pull neighborhood-specific information to present at NIA meetings, allowing them to generate the information independently without relying on crime analysts, which is a benefit. If there is a shooting, the CPO discusses the incident at the meeting and answers questions. During those meetings, both community and TPD interviewees said that residents often share information useful for investigative purposes. Most community interviewees said that CPOs consistently attended their NIA meetings. However, when CPOs are inconsistent in terms of who attends, interviewees shared frustration in that some CPOs are more forthcoming with information than others. The community would like to see consistent willingness to share information from TPD personnel. One community interviewee applauded seeing new TPD officers introduced during NIA meetings as a way for residents and officers to get to know one another.

While community interviewees value CPOs, they noted that CPOs are not the same officers whom residents see when they call for service. CPOs are engaged in positive settings with residents, so there need to be other opportunities to have patrol officers introduced to residents. CBO leaders shared that some NIA presidents, particularly in areas with higher gun violence, might say that their residents have little interaction with TPD beyond "day to day policing". CBO leaders stated that the community needs more from law enforcement in terms of engagement. In general, the community desires more community policing and relationship-building with frontline officers. CBO leaders said that when they invite TPD to community events, TPD typically attends. However, outside of community events, CBO leaders said that residents have few opportunities to see and interact with officers. One CBO leader remarked that he does not often see officers on patrol or connecting with residents in the community. Another said that in recent years, TPD's community outreach and interactions at community events seem "forced" and "not genuine." They went on to say, "Officers are here on overtime, and I can tell. You have exceptions, but that vibe is

there. They are tired and it shows." Feedback from TPD personnel reflected similar concerns. One TPD respondent shared that patrol officers rarely have the time to provide "any decent citizen/public service during their tour of duty." Consequently, TPD has often received complaints from the community about "the lack of empathy, or effort made during the call for service and follow up" leading to resident "disbelief that TPD is goal oriented on keeping the general public and city safe."

An information-sharing strategy used in the past was quarterly or yearly crime summits led by TPD to provide the community with information. These summits were held in various areas of town and were publicized through local media and social media. Information shared included crime statistics, updates on new technologies utilized by TPD, and crime prevention education. The community was also provided with resources and materials that they could take away. Several CBO and TPD interviewees expressed an interest in bringing these summits back.

A recurring need shared by both TPD and community interviewees was for TPD to increase its use of social media to share information. Interviewees said that TPD's social media should highlight positive community initiatives and high clearance rates. Currently, there is a personnel position outside of TPD that facilitates TPD's and the fire department's social media. There is no internal TPD public information officer (PIO). TPD interviewees expressed that without having someone committed to TPD's social media internally, the agency is falling behind in self-promotion and information-sharing opportunities. Furthermore, some TPD interviewees expressed concern that without having a PIO, relationships with local media outlets have suffered. No one is available to do interviews when the media requests, and there is no specific point-of-contact for the media. The perception is that local media outlets have grown tired of reaching out to TPD for information or requests and not receiving anything back.

Community interviewees said that if there is a reason that TPD cannot share certain information, they would like to know why. According to one CBO interviewee, when TPD does not share information, the community perceives it as TPD having something to hide. They emphasized that while the community understands that sometimes information cannot be shared, they are just looking for consistent feedback to explain why.

A few CBOs interviewed stated that they do not currently have any existing relationship with TPD and, therefore, do not have any regular communication with TPD. There are opportunities for TPD to build relationships with these organizations by learning what they do and exploring how TPD can support their programming.

One community interviewee shared that while Black residents comprise less than 10% of Topeka's population, gun violence disproportionately impacts Black residents. She went on to say that she does not perceive that there are connections between leaders in the Black community with city or law enforcement leaders.

Several CBO leaders stated that the community needs education about laws and criminal justice processes. "Things need to be put in layman's terms so that everyone has the opportunity to understand the information."

At least 3 CBOs mentioned that in the past, TPD specifically notified them when shooting incidents occurred, and all stated that they would like to see a notification process re-implemented. Some CBOs

and churches have responses that they would like to implement as soon as they are aware of an incident. CBO leaders expressed that it important that they know quickly when a shooting event occurs because such an event affects the entire neighborhood even if no one was struck by gunfire. CBOs are in place to address the trauma related to these types of incidents, which they feel that TPD does not acknowledge currently. These impacts of shooting incidents are felt by the broader community even if no one was struck. Most CBO leaders stated that they do not know the TPD victim advocate personally but are open to working with her, provided TPD better utilizes and includes her in shooting incidents.

Recommendations

Consider making it a standard practice for new and tenured officers alike to attend NIA meetings in their patrol areas periodically or otherwise obtain contact information for NIA presidents to provide residents and TPD with a point person for communication. As one interviewee stated, "We need our neighbors to be comfortable with the officers they see when they need help."

To increase opportunities to build connections in the community, community interviewees suggested that officers volunteer with clean-up and other revitalization efforts that NIAs and Block Talks are leading. Community interviewees also suggested that officers need to build relationships with youth. When attending community events, it was suggested that TPD officers show up in plain clothes rather than uniforms. Another community suggestion was to consider more foot patrol, allowing residents greater opportunities for direct engagement with officers. Consider more foot patrols in neighborhoods that are currently doing Block Talks and have officers make introductions with residents through the Block Talks prior to implementing foot patrols.

TPD officers should attend CBO-led events and actively engage with residents during these gatherings. Some personnel may not be naturally outgoing or have skills for engagement. Be sure that TPD officers are trained and equipped to participate in community engagement. When officers remain segregated from residents and keep to themselves, this limits trust building from the community's perspective. Consider giving TPD personnel a specific role or task while at community events to foster engagement with residents as part of that task. Consult with neighborhood associations or CBOs who host events to see if there is an active task or role for an officer. Continually assess the need for buy-in from officers and provide education on how community engagement is a crime fighting strategy with long-term benefits.

Community engagement must be viewed from within the LEA as an ongoing process and be mainstreamed in the organization, not viewed as one-off project or a function relegated to specialized community units.[26] It is important not to relegate community engagement activities and relationship-building to specific units or officers. All officers and TPD personnel should be not only encouraged to serve these functions but also trained to do so. Best practices recommend that TPD include community engagement as part of the evaluation process. When performance appraisals include community engagement indicators, officers will be less likely to view these efforts as "add-on" duties rather than essential parts of their roles.[27]

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[26] Myhill, op cit.
[27] Myhill, op cit.

Leverage CBOs and leaders who the community trusts to help disseminate information. TPD needs to invest time building relationships with community partners so they can be a voice for TPD.

Given the community's optimism about the new chief, provide opportunities for the chief to engage in one-on-one meetings with local CBOs to meet leadership and learn about their work.

Consider a formal strategy or system to notify NIAs and other CBOs working in areas across the city of when shootings occur. This will help CBOs initiate community-led responses as appropriate.

High-level command staff should attend community meetings and events in addition to frontline officers and CPOs. This is impactful and important, as research on effective police–community engagement states that LEA leadership must demonstrate commitment to community engagement from the top down.[28]

Consider ways to make community meetings more accessible. Consider virtual attendance options and meeting venues at locations such as schools or churches, which are more convenient for residents.

- Guidance from the International Association of Chiefs of Police[29] suggests the following. Interestingly, these recommendations were also mentioned by residents in the High Point focus groups:
  - Communicate in languages and formats understood by community members
  - Rotate meetings between different locations, days, and times
  - Provide virtual participation options
  - Communicate frequently via email, social media, and community events
  - Solicit information from diverse communities to find the best way to relay information to those communities

Consider tasking in-house personnel with TPD's social media facilitation and PIO functions. This would allow for more frequent updates, opportunities to highlight positive stories, and keep the community updated when arrests are made or when investigative information is needed. See Tips from the Urban Institute's Social Media Guidebook for Law Enforcement Agencies[30] include the following:

- "Develop relationships with community members and CBOs that have large audiences" and interact with them via social media. Doing so will make it more likely that they will share or interact with your content, "exponentially increasing the number of people who will see" your content.
- Schedule and plan content and posts. (See Figure 2 for an example of a social media calendar provided by a peer LEA.)
- "Include media such as photos and videos."

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[28] Santos, R., & Santos, R. (2024). *Operationalizing proactive community engagement: A framework for police organizations.* Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. https://portal.cops.usdoj.gov/resourcecenter/content.ashx/cops-r1145-pub.pdf
[29] International Association of Chiefs of Police, (n.d.), Community engagement.
[30] Tiry, E., Oglesby-Neal, A., & Kim, K. (2019). *Social media guidebook for law enforcement agencies: Strategies for effective community engagement.* Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99786/social_media_guidebook_for_law_enforcement_agencies_0.pdf

- ■ "Regularly monitor social media mentions of your agency."

Figure 2. Example of Social Media Calendar

3.2 Monitoring and Accountability

At the Monitoring and Accountability level, TPD should be transparent about and accountable for the services it provides. For law enforcement, having a community or citizen advisory board review departmental actions is recommended. Additionally, LEAs can be transparent by consistently sharing information with the community about critical incidents; for example, use social media and press conferences to provide real-time updates and opening meetings and forums with the community to address questions.

3.2.1 Findings and Recommendations: Monitoring and Accountability

Findings

The community would like to see greater transparency in officer-involved shooting incidents, specifically the release of body camera footage. The release of body camera footage is not typically done in Kansas, but recent incidents have raised concerns from the community about transparency and accountability. One interviewee stated, "Other cities release the videos so the community can see what happened and understand it."

Many CBO leaders shared that they would like to see a citizen advisory or review board where the community can review police practices and make recommendations to TPD for improvement. This is a desire that has been discussed often, according to CBO interviewees, but has yet to be implemented.

Recommendations

It is a best practice that Topeka have a citizen advisory or oversight board. Studies about effective citizen advisory boards suggest that citizen oversight agencies that oversee the police do lead to a reduction in racial disparities in policing outcomes, but only when they have both a broad scope of authority and

sustained local governmental support in terms of human and budgetary resources.[31] If such a board is not already in place, consider whether one should be implemented.

When there is a reason why video cannot be released, it is essential to communicate to the community the reasons. As noted in the prior section, when there are reasons for certain practices, the community just seeks to understand them.

TPD's practices for critical incident response should align with recommendations from the International Association of Chiefs of Police[32] in response to high-profile police incidents:

- "Be present immediately. Make a comment and answer questions." Rather than a "no comment," provide some comment such as, "We are aware of the incident and are actively investigating. We will release more information once we gather it."

- "Gather a team and formulate a plan… for frequency and location of communication updates, as well as anticipated hurdles and sensitive topics…. Appropriate representation of the community [on this team] can speak to sentiment and pulse of those impacted by the crisis."

- Transparency builds trust. "If you cannot provide requested information, explain why it is not available at this time, when it might become available, and if there is a specific process for requesting it." This point is especially important as some community members stated that they see video being released in other cities. The community may not understand differences in state or local policies or how the release of video could impact investigations or ongoing litigation.

- "Explain the process," including "department policy regarding internal and investigative processes…. Circulate this information in the form of handouts or online through social media" as needed to clearly outline processes.

Consider ways that formal relationships and processes can be established between community leaders and TPD so that if a critical incident occurs, the chief and community leaders can meet to agree on next steps and develop a statement of unity. Then, community leaders could tell the community they have been briefed and understand next steps in response to the incident. These leaders can vouch for TPD to the community and help the community understand why TPD may need additional time before releasing details or specific information in some cases. However, these leaders will need to be people who are trusted within the community and willing to collaborate with TPD. According to one CBO interviewee, a similar process used to occur in the past under a prior chief's administration, but the process has not been in place in a long time.

3.3   Strategic Consultation Leading Toward Partnerships and Cooperation

At the Strategic Consultation level, TPD should be obtaining community feedback about concerns, acknowledging the concerns, and then providing a public response about how community input has informed decision-making about strategies to address the concerns. An important component is that the community has opportunities to provide feedback to TPD. Two-way communication at this level is key.

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[31] Ali, M. U., & Nicholson-Crotty, S. (2020). Examining the accountability-performance link: The case of citizen oversight of police. *Public Performance & Management Review, 44*(3), 523–559. https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2020.1806086
[32] International Association of Chiefs of Police. (n.d.). *Communicating to build trust*. https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/243806_IACP_Comm-Pol_Trust_Building_4_0.pdf

Information from the community should help TPD understand community priorities and then develop strategies that reflect those priorities. Therefore, findings will be presented about information that CBOs share with TPD to highlight community priorities and about community members' perceptions of TPD's consultation with them.

At the Partnership/Cooperation level of community engagement, TPD would partner with CBOs and community residents at each point of decision-making about gun violence prevention and response, including to identify and develop alternative strategies and solutions. TPD would seek advice from CBOs and residents and rely on innovation and partnership to develop and implement solutions. The idea is to maximize the level of community involvement and input and ensure that community members know how their input and recommendations were included in final decisions.

Without effective strategic consultation, it will be difficult for TPD to progress toward effective partnerships and collaboration.

3.3.1 Findings and Recommendations: Strategic Consultation and Partnership/Cooperation

Findings

From the community's standpoint, gun violence is a priority. According to a CBO leader, a recent community health needs assessment in Topeka found safety and violence were among the top-rated concerns by community members.

Some CBOs stated that when they ask TPD for data about crime, they receive it. One community leader said that they asked their CPO for the last 20 years of violent crime data, and it was provided to her. She was very pleased by TPD's responsiveness to her request, as the data was helpful for her strategic planning. Yet, other organizations stated that they are looking for more comprehensive data and information from TPD. One CBO leader said that they feel like there is "no transparency in terms of what the violent crime numbers are", making it difficult to compare the data she is tracking about gun violence with what TPD has, "so we can compare apples to apples". She stated that TPD, "does not always need to try to make it look like things are fine" by not reporting accurately about gun violence data. She said that sharing data will help with community trust and that everyone must acknowledge that, "things are not always rosy and need to be real." She said that in her experience when she has asked TPD for data about homicide locations, for example, they have not provided it. She went on to say that if TPD cannot share data or information, they should explain why. Access to data is very important to community partners because it guides so much of their prevention efforts. One CBO leader stated, "In order to serve the community, TPD needs to be part of it." Some CBO leaders mentioned TPD's end-of-year report, which provides data about homicide clearances, but they were interested in learning more about the racial breakdown of cleared cases. Another CBO is tracking their own data about violent crime including demographics about involved persons, arrests, and convictions since 2024. The CBO has not had communication with TPD about the data they are tracking. The CBO also relies on a dashboard called My Sidewalk, which includes data on social determinants of health impacting local neighborhoods. There are opportunities for TPD to help CBOs with data needs and information-sharing which would benefit those CBOs by helping them understand where to direct their resources.

CBO leaders were asked whether their organization shares information with TPD. One concern mentioned was that they feel they are not being heard by TPD when they do share information. This concern was specifically about CBO leaders sharing information about potential retaliatory acts of violence with TPD. One CBO leader stated that when sharing this type of information with TPD, "It feels like it falls on deaf ears. Therefore, we [as community] do not know what to do with that information." These concerns have partly led to the development of CIVIC, which will utilize violence interruption strategies. One CBO leader stated that information is not being taken from the community or being acted upon with urgency and intensity by TPD. He did acknowledge that TPD needs to be able to filter information effectively, but they need to have some sort of process and policy to follow up on tips, and those processes need to be communicated to the community. He went on to say, "While TPD has a tipline, we are talking about a relationship. Trust moves at the speed of a relationship. Presence is necessary to have the relationship." The community wants to feel that their input is valuable, and that information will be followed up on by TPD, even if not in the way the community had hoped for.

CBO leaders shared other negative experiences with TPD and feeling like their needs were not heard. One CBO leader described a Block Talk area where a leader tried to reach out to TPD about a specific issue. After the initial contact, TPD was reported to have stopped taking the Block Talk leader's calls. In her case, she was not calling about violence specifically, but she felt very frustrated that she was not being heard. Other concerns from CBO leaders were that TPD can take a long time to follow up or get back to community members when they do reach out. This experience was described as, "common."

Several community members mentioned a strategic partnership to implement Group Violence Intervention (GVI) which failed. The partnership included the District Attorney's Office, TPD, and community groups to reduce gun violence. From the community's perspective, the program was not implemented well and has since changed its scope. As such, the community is skeptical of partnering again with criminal justice agencies.

In general, CBO leaders stated that they do not meet with TPD to discuss priorities or develop strategies together. There are currently not any opportunities for regular strategic consultation between local CBOs and TPD. Some TPD interviewees expressed that TPD would have the capacity to convene groups. A desire expressed by CBO leaders was to have an opportunity to have everyone at the table, including CBOs and TPD representatives. The community is looking for opportunities to talk about strategies and what can be done to address gun violence and increase community-law enforcement trust. Attendees would need to be open to acknowledging what is not currently working and open to changes in strategies.

Some CBO leaders stated that TPD will reach out to ask for their advice on occasion, but that communication largely depends on who the chief is. One CBO leader stated that they have not met the new chief yet but is looking forward to the opportunity to do so. Other CBO leaders echoed interest in what opportunities for partnership will look like under the new chief. They are hopeful for improved information-sharing, transparency, and opportunities for partnership.

Recommendations

Several opportunities exist to build strategic consultation and cooperation between CBOs and TPD.

There is a lot of enthusiasm expressed by CBO leaders about the new TPD chief. There is excitement to meet with him and potentially build collaborative work. However, TPD will likely need to acknowledge past harms or negative experiences that the community has had with TPD and other criminal justice agencies. Consider one-on-one meetings between the chief with CBO leaders, particularly CIVIC and NIAs, to learn about their programs and priorities. During these meetings, TPD can also share their existing needs and discuss ways of potentially partnering, which may include direct on-scene response by trained CBO or faith leaders or near-term follow-up with victims and surviving families of gun violence. Take an inventory to learn about other CBOs active in gun violence prevention and response for initial outreach. See Appendix A for an inventory that has been started. Identify a point person for continued outreach beyond the initial meeting so that this person can serve as a point-of-contact between TPD and CBOs.

Consider ways that community members and CBO leaders can share information about their concerns and priorities, including from those who hold supportive, neutral, and critical viewpoints.[33] Take stock of the opportunities and venues available. Consider town hall meetings where CBO leaders and residents can discuss specific topics of concern with TPD. Through understanding community priorities, it will lay the foundation for a collaborative model for the co-creation of programs, policies, and strategies by TPD and the community, which is important to elevating to the next level of community engagement in the typology. Follow-up is needed on suggestions and recommendations provided from the community through regular communication, so that the community can learn about the impact of any strategies that have been implemented. It will be important for TPD to consider who is responsible for discussing priorities, how to reach most of the community who are not actively participating in community meetings, and how to make sure that priorities and decisions are reflective of the entire community.

Consider the value of hosting a meeting led by TPD to include local CBOs who are active in gun violence prevention and response. CBOs are looking for more opportunities to share their priorities with TPD and to plan collaboratively. This venue could also be a good place for TPD to acknowledge community concerns due to negative past experiences and demonstrate TPD's commitment to positive community engagement and building partnerships.

Encourage patrol officers to identify the CBOs or neighborhood groups in their area and make in-person visits to build connections. Acknowledge that there may be some initial resistance on the part of the community members to welcome TPD initially due to past experiences. However, TPD leadership can set the stage for these outreach opportunities to be well-received and to establish a new foundation of increased community engagement efforts. Be sure these efforts by patrol officers are documented and accounted for in performance reviews.

Consult with the community to identify the types of data that would be helpful for them as they build out their gun violence prevention and intervention strategies. Consider institutionalizing a data or information-sharing process with regular CBO partners so that those partners will have real-time (or near real-time) data. If there are reasons why certain information cannot be shared, be sure that the community is aware of those reasons.

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[33] International Association of Chiefs of Police, (n.d.), Community engagement.

3.3.2   Findings & Recommendations: Empowerment

At the highest level of community engagement, Empowerment, the community ultimately owns the issue of gun violence prevention and response and has final decision-making authority about strategies and solutions, with TPD implementing whatever the community decides will address concerns about gun violence or with the community owning the response. Depending on the issue or concern at hand, elevating community engagement to the level of empowerment may not always be feasible.

Findings

CBO leaders discussed the importance of having the community lead gun violence intervention and prevention efforts. Specifically, they described that local law enforcement agencies typically do not have the relationships and trust within communities to directly address individuals involved in gun violence perpetration and victimization. Further, law enforcement does not have the necessary supports to help individuals address the situations and circumstances contributing to their high risk for gun violence. As such, the community views violence intervention as a key role that they should play, not law enforcement, and they are prepared to take it on through their upcoming plans with CIVIC.

CIVIC is a community-based coalition developed by the community for the community to address gun violence by addressing the underlying or root causes of it. CIVIC took a data-driven approach to understand what the community wanted and needed. CIVIC hosted town halls, community meetings, and went door-to-door to gather data from residents. Feedback from the community suggested that they wanted to do more things together to build relationships and cohesion amongst residents. Residents stated that they wanted a "neighborly bond" in neighborhoods impacted by violence. Block parties and larger events such as National Night Out are nice, but residents wanted smaller neighborhood-based events. As a result, Block Talks were organized. Safe Streets facilitates the Block Talks, through which each neighborhood creates their own action plans specific to the individual needs. Efforts may include neighborhood clean-ups, events to create relationships among residents, and increased access to opportunities and resources all toward the common goals of creating safer neighborhoods.

Block Talks may present an opportunity for TPD to engage with residents. However, CBO leaders involved with Block Talks said that there is work to be done to repair damaged relationships and mistrust before residents will be ready to engage with TPD.

Leaders stressed the importance of addressing the underlying causes of gun violence, which include lack of education, job opportunities, affordable housing, and other resources. These were described as social determinants of health, a term which one CBO leader stated was used by the current TPD chief. The community sees a shared vision with TPD to address social determinants of health, and the community appreciates that the TPD chief understands this approach.

Several CBOs shared examples of how they are empowered to address gun violence in the community. Examples included peace circles and addressing needs of those at risk of violence. However, they are doing so largely on their own and without direct partnership or support from TPD. There are several "groups within groups" doing gun violence prevention and response work in Topeka so there is a synergy between groups to be empowered to address gun violence, but there may be some overlap or confusion about roles of each group. CIVIC is working carefully to develop a strategic action plan in hopes of creating cohesion and organization.

Recommendations

There are a great number of community-led efforts in which CBOs have empowered the community to address and respond to gun violence. Even so, all community interviewees stated a need for partnership with law enforcement. Continue to support and validate these existing community-driven efforts, but also, as noted above, have strategic discussions with community residents and leaders about how TPD can more formally support these approaches.

For those community-led efforts that TPD is unaware of, set up meetings with CBO leaders to learn about the CBO and its strategies and priorities. After learning more about them, TPD should be an advocate for these CBOs and their efforts publicly or in any settings where LEA support will carry weight.

TPD should be educated about various ongoing community-led initiatives, which may include community violence intervention programs, to make sure they understand how these programs work and what information may be shared between TPD and CBOs to support their work.

Given CIVIC's development of community violence intervention work currently, CBO leaders who comprise CIVIC were asked specifically what they would like to see from TPD. Note: the assessment team met with six CBO leaders as a group representing the different CBOs comprising CIVIC. CIVIC CBO leaders expressed that in an ideal world, there would be open data-sharing from TPD to inform CIVIC's strategies, an official MOU between TPD and CIVIC specifying commitments, and a liaison dedicated specifically to CIVIC by TPD. The liaison would work with CIVIC leadership to ensure that goals are being met. While CIVIC does not anticipate that the TPD liaison would work directly with street outreach workers/violence interrupters, rather, CIVIC agency leadership would meet regularly with TPD, and TPD would be part of the coalition, or ecosystem, that is being built for community violence intervention.

4. Community Partnerships and Participation in Investigations

4.1 CBO Inventory

To provide TPD with the landscape of CBOs working on gun violence prevention and response, we created an inventory of CBOs found in Appendix A. This inventory will allow TPD to identify where it has strong connections and where there are relationship gaps that could be further developed. The CBOs included in the inventory were identified via TPD, CBO leaders who participated in the CLEARS assessment, or the media scan. LEA respondents in the Community Policing Unit were asked about the CBOs that they interacted with. CBOs identified included Safe Streets (mentioned by two respondents), NIA groups (mentioned by two respondents), Topeka SENT, Stormont Vail, and unspecified local churches and city leaders. Appendix A details the gun violence prevention and response activities that CBOs participate in. This table is meant to summarize the prevention and response activities that are currently supported by CBOs.

4.2 Increasing Community Participation in Investigations

CBO leaders and TPD personnel were asked about their perceptions of the level of community participation in investigations and asked about potential strategies that may increase the level of community participation in investigations.

4.2.1 Findings

The community and TPD personnel alike stated that increasing community participation in investigations will require trust between the community and TPD. It is difficult for community members to share information with police because they must continue to live in the community with the suspect and may fear retaliation. However, there are CBO leaders who have reportedly shared investigative information with TPD, but that information is not perceived to be typically acted upon according to CBO leaders.

In general, TPD respondents reported that Crime Stoppers is successful in generating tips. The media scan revealed that the Shawnee County Crime Stoppers information is typically shared in media reports of gun violence where suspect information is sought. The Crime Stoppers liaison estimated that about half of rewards do not get picked up. This suggests that Crime Stoppers messaging to motivate community use of the program may need to appeal to motivations other than just the financial incentive, which has traditionally been the focal point of Crime Stoppers messaging. As always, education and information about how Crime Stoppers works to maintain anonymity throughout the process is needed, and this information should be reiterated often. The Crime Stoppers liaison has put a lot of effort into community education to explain the program's anonymity and the new processes that have been put into place to increase safeguards.

Only one CBO mentioned actively promoting Crime Stoppers. CBOs could be educated about Crime Stoppers and then leveraged to vouch for the program to the community to increase participation.

4.2.2 Recommendations

TPD's community engagement efforts and interactions in the community lay the foundation for trust. See Section 3 for recommendations about how TPD can increase community engagement efforts and use social media to build trust between the community and TPD. Having CBOs who are trusted by the community to vouch for TPD and help build relationships is important. However, TPD will need to take time to mend relationships with CBOs and community members who feel they have been harmed by negative experiences or to build relationships with CBOs with whom TPD has never had existing relationships. If relationships are built or repaired, these CBOs could possibly serve as "bridgers" or "buffers" between community members with information that may be helpful for investigations and TPD. If CBO staff are willing to do so, policies and procedures may be established to help CBOs understand how they can safely and confidentially pass investigative information onto TPD and identify appropriate points of contact. However, CBOs must feel confident that the information they share will be acted upon by TPD. This has been problem area in the past, according to CBO interviewees

Another suggestion mentioned by two community leaders was for TPD to look at their recruiting and hiring practices. It was suggested that TPD should have people "who look like the community" to go out and recruit and have conversations with the community. The idea is to recruit a more diverse police workforce.

For patrol officers and detectives who respond to the hospital for gunshot incidents, be sure that they are leaving their contact information so that victims and families will know how to follow up on cases. It appears that this is an inconsistent practice currently, according to CBO feedback. Also, be sure that case

assignments are being made to detectives for nonfatal shootings in a timely manner so that victims and families have a point-of-contact immediately for investigative purposes.

Review messaging and branding about Crime Stoppers to ensure that it resonates with the community, includes messaging about anonymity, and clarifies how Crime Stoppers works to ensure anonymity. Messaging may include specific content stating that no one's identity has ever been compromised through their participation in Crime Stoppers if this is true.

Educate CBOs about Crime Stoppers and other reporting mechanisms available to residents so that trusted CBOs can in turn educate residents about these reporting options and how they are confidential and anonymous to promote community use.

Educate local media outlets about the importance of including Crime Stoppers information in their reporting about incidents where suspects have yet to be identified, to make it standard practice that all media outlets do so consistently.

Be sure that messaging says that Crime Stoppers is not connected to or a part of TPD or any other LEA. Consider having individuals who have been impacted by violence, such as a family member who lost a loved one, to be included in the messaging about how having an unsolved case has affected them and why it is important to come forward with information.

There are opportunities to explore what other jurisdictions are doing to combat the "no snitching" norm to identify approaches that can be implemented in Topeka. CBOs should be brought in as partners or as leaders in these efforts. Consider convening a working group, including community leaders and community-led organizations, to discuss strategies around this topic. Partner with community groups to develop forums and spaces to discuss norms about "no snitching," which would include listening to the community (especially young people) about their perceptions of the norm, the reasons it exists, and their suggestions to overcome it.

Consider ways to increase access to technology such as doorbell cameras, subscriptions, and internet capabilities for community members to increase the likelihood that investigative information will be captured on video and can be stored and accessed in areas that are most impacted by violent crime. The CLEARS team can help make connections with peer sites who have explored options to increase access through providing free or reduced cost internet and free cameras to residents and business owners.

Given concerns about retaliation as a barrier to community participation, examine options available for victim/witness safety. Develop a protocol for TPD and partners to identify, record, and respond to acts of victim/witness intimidation. Consult *Improving Witness Safety and Preventing Witness Intimidation in the Justice System: Benchmarks for Progress*[34] by AEquitas for specific strategies in this area. Once protocols are developed, tell the community about these efforts and specify what can be done to protect victims and witnesses.

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[34] Cruz, F., & Garvey, T. M. (2014). *Improving witness safety and preventing witness intimidation in the justice system: Benchmarks for progress*. AEquitas. https://aequitasresource.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Benchmarks-for-Progress.pdf

Related to fear of retaliation, when possible, avoid putting victim names or witnesses on paper until it is absolutely necessary. Have detectives tell witnesses at the scene that "I am asking everyone" these questions to take pressure off any single witness interviewed.

Identify ways to bring in supports and resources into impacted communities to address trauma experienced by residents, even if no one was hurt or struck by gunfire. Consider a response such as RESET (Rapid Engagement of Support in the Event of Trauma: https://www.roanokeva.gov/2868/Rapid-Engagement-of-Support-in-the-Event) implemented by the Roanoke Police Department which is specifically designed to provide a law enforcement-community coordinated response to neighborhoods impacted by gun violence to identify resource needs and address trauma. RESET responses have led to investigative information from the community even though that is not the intended goal of the program. The CLEARS assessment team can provide a connection to Roanoke Police Department's RESET Coordinator, if desired. One CBO leader described, "Walk and Talks" as a consideration. This is similar to RESET in that the goal is to provide a response after a shooting where law enforcement and community partners come into an area and talk to everyone affected to find out what they need. There would need to be good to be discussions about who should lead the effort and how much law enforcement presence would be ideal.

Appendix A. Inventory of CBO Partnerships on Gun Violence Prevention and Response

Community Group Descriptors					How Mentioned or Known			Gun Violence Prevention and Response Activities								
Group Name	CLEARS Interview?	Group Type	Overview	Area of Focus	From LEA	Media Scan	Other CBO Leader	Raising Awareness	Providing GV Prevention	Youth-Focused Prevention	Formal Responses to Shootings	Resources for Victims and Families	Anti–No Snitching Efforts	Violence Interruption	Gaining Witness Participation	Promoting Crime Stoppers
SENT Topeka	Yes	Nonprofit	Community organization that fosters housing and business development, education, and health and wellness for members of Shawnee County	Specific Districts	Yes			Yes, Participates in National Night Out promoting gun safety	Yes, Provides programming and resources like food, education, and wellness for community members		No	Yes, provides mental health, substance use disorder, housing, education, and food to community members	No	No	No	No
Avondale Care Center	Yes	Community Grassroots	A network of community partners and resource vendors providing wellness services and case management to community members	Citywide			Yes	A leader that is also part of Avondale Care Center was included in the SENT Topeka interview. An overview of Avondale Care Center was provided during the interview, but the focus was on SENT Topeka. Therefore, specific gun violence prevention and response activities were not recorded for Avondale Care Center.								
Fellowship Hi Crest	Yes	Faith-based	A liaison from church to local schools to provide wraparound services to youth and families, promoting socioemotional learning	Citywide			Yes	A leader that is also part of Fellowship Hi Crest was included in the SENT Topeka interview. An overview of Fellowship Hi Crest was provided during the interview, but the focus was on SENT Topeka. Therefore, specific gun violence prevention and response activities were not recorded for Fellowship Hi Crest.								
Topeka Center for Peace and Justice	Yes	Nonprofit	Community organization that practices restorative justice to address community violence through mediation, accountability, and outreach efforts in local schools and communities	Citywide	Yes		Yes	Yes, Holds rallies to share community issues, partners with CIVIC	Yes, Youth-focused mediation, accountability, and outreach projects	Yes, Mediation and outreach initiatives for youth in local schools	Yes, Conducts rallies and prayer vigils at local churches	Yes, Works with families to provide grief counseling and address other needs	No	Yes, Conducts conflict mediations between victims and perpetrators	No	No

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Community Group Descriptors					How Mentioned or Known			Gun Violence Prevention and Response Activities								
Group Name	CLEARS Interview?	Group Type	Overview	Area of Focus	From LEA	Media Scan	Other CBO Leader	Raising Awareness	Providing GV Prevention	Youth-Focused Prevention	Formal Response to Shootings	Resources for Victims and Families	Anti–No Snitching Efforts	Violence Interruption	Gaining Witness Participation	Promott-ing Crime Stoppers
Safe Streets	Yes	Nonprofit	An initiative under Prevention and Resiliency Services (PARS), which facilitates Block Talks to empower the community	Specific Districts	Yes			Yes, hosts regular meetings encourage-ing participa-tion from community members	Yes, provides gun locks and has a partner-ship with Moms Demand Action	Yes, partnered with Silver-backs to host meals at commun-ity centers to establish future Block Talk leaders	Yes, the next day resource are provided to commun-ity members	Yes, provides access to mental health, housing, and other commun-ity resources	No	No	No	Yes
CIVIC	Yes	Community Grassroots	A team of varying agencies and organizations in Shawne County who are working to implement CVI strategies	Specific Districts		Yes	Yes	Plans for specific gun violence prevention and response activities are currently under development. CIVIC will include a violence interruption component using street outreach workers.								
Stormont Vail Health	Yes	Healthcare	A trauma center that provides care and case management for gun violence victims	Citywide	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes, Provide case manage-ment and resources to gunshot survivors	Yes	No	No	No	No
Office of Community Engage-ment	Yes	Unit of City Govt	City office that provides education and programming for neighborhood development	Citywide	Yes											
IISBA	Yes	Nonprofit	Provides employment &	Citywide		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No

			training services, youth development & community service activities, & support services focused on those who have been justice-involved. Long history of anti-gang and youth prevention and intervention work.												

The following groups were identified from LEA, media scan, or by another CBO leader, but no representatives were interviewed, so a full inventory of activities is not available. The groups are organized in the table based on how they were known or identified during the assessment process (e.g., From LEA, Media Scan, Other CBO Leader).

Group Name	From LEA	Media Scan	Other CBO Leader	Raising Awareness	Providing GV Prevention	Youth-Focused Prevention	Formal Responses to Shootings	Resources for Victims and Families	Anti–No Snitching Efforts	Violence Interruption	Gaining Witness Participation	Promoting Crime Stoppers
Moms Demand Action		Yes	Yes									
Neighborhood Improvement Associations (NIAs)	Yes		Yes									
Topeka JUMP	Yes		Yes									