

KING COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON STATE POLICE-PROSECUTION PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE "3PI"

"Shots Fired" Initiative - Partnering with King County law enforcement agencies to collect illegal shootings data on firearms for analysis to develop firearm violence reduction strategies.

2017 King County Firearm Violence:
8 Agencies Historically Experienced Most Gun Violence

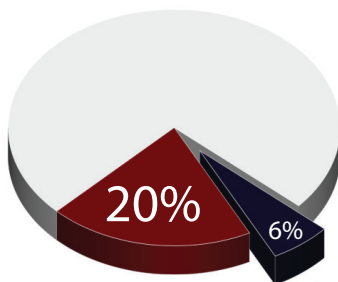


Chart 1: 687 Shots Fired Incidents¹

- 6% of shots fired incidents resulted people killed with firearms
- 20% of shots fired incidents resulted people wounded by firearms

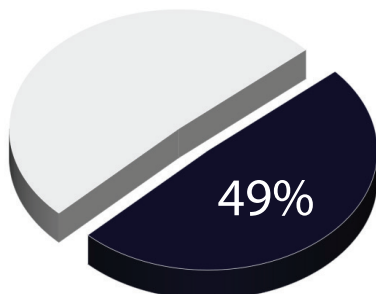


Chart 2: 49% of shooting victims were under the age of 25 years²

The Problem: Lack of Data Collection and Analysis

King County, Washington, a jurisdiction of over 2 million people, including Seattle, is comprised of 40 law enforcement agencies. A review of violent crime incidents from 2011-2015 in Seattle revealed a violent crime increase of 11%; however, the percentage of violent crimes involving use of a firearm increased by 29.4%. Despite this increase in gun violence, law enforcement was unable to determine the number of people shot in King County in 2016, because there was no centralized collection of data between the county's law enforcement agencies. Due to this problem, non-fatal shootings data was not being collected and analyzed for development of evidence-based crime strategies.

¹ King County Prosecuting Attorney's Report, 2017

² King County Prosecuting Attorney's Report, 2017

The Response:

In 2016, the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, in partnership with seven law enforcement agencies, Public Health Seattle and King County, and a researcher from California State University-Fresno, was awarded a Police-Prosecution Partnership (3PI) grant through the Bureau of Justice Assistance to: (1) form a Crime Strategies Unit (CSU), comprised of two prosecutors and an analyst to collect, institutionalize, and analyze shots fired data from seven partner police agencies and develop firearm reduction strategies; (2) conduct a review of firearm-related deaths of young adults, ages 18-25 years, similar to the Milwaukee Homicide Review Process; and, (3) engage community stakeholders on issues of firearm violence, including evidence-based strategies.

Key Objective:

- Create internal structures to support a data-driven prosecution model within the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office.
- Develop standardized data collection methods and protocols for CSU and partners.
- Develop standardized data sharing methods and protocols for CSU and partners.
- Train crime analysts across King County partner agencies in social network analysis (SNA).
- Conduct SNA to identify hot spots and key victims and offenders.
- Develop policies and procedures for aggressive prosecutorial, law enforcement, and/or community-based responses of prolific firearm offenders.
- Assess the process and impact of shots fired and adjust responses as needed.
- Partnering with Public Health Seattle, and King County, conduct young adult firearm homicide reviews.

Biggest Challenge: Data-Sharing

Each of the seven law enforcement partners has its own records management system, and as a result, agencies were not consistently sharing information across other jurisdictions in King County. To address this lack of data-sharing, each day these seven agencies send CSU a summary of every firearm-related incident in their jurisdiction over the previous 24 hours. That information is summarized and immediately sent out to a law enforcement listserv for use in ongoing investigations. Additionally, the CSU's crime analyst is compiling more detailed data and providing monthly reports to crime analysts in the region.

“Combining shots fired information across 7 law enforcement jurisdictions has revealed just how multi-jurisdictional firearm violence is in King County. Developing a cooperative approach between the community and local and federal law enforcement is the work of 2018 and beyond.”

-Karissa Taylor, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney/Project Lead

Early Success:

Multiple training opportunities have brought the CSU and the crime analysts from each of the partner law enforcement jurisdictions together during the first year of program implementation. California State University-Fresno research partner Dr. Andrew Fox led three different training workshops on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and SNA for analysts, and Subject Matter Expert Julie Wartell taught ArcGIS mapping. The goal is to combine SNA and mapping to identify both shooting incident locations and networks of people associated with those shootings for gun crime analysis.

“...it was “fascinating to see how crime spreads throughout networks in Seattle and its suburbs, and that over the next year, the team will identify strategies to break up these connections over the seven jurisdictions.”

-Dr. Andrew Fox

Lessons and Next Steps:

For a jurisdiction considering a “Shots Fired” Initiative, an early but primary task is collecting, standardizing, and sharing reliable shootings data and analysis among law enforcement agencies. This practice strengthens intelligence and investigative purposes and provides broader firearm violence reduction strategies. During the next year, CSU will continue to engage with each agency to use the data to: identify individuals for early intervention and prevention activities; gain a better understanding of an individual's risk of victimization based on their location in the shots fired network; and, use mapping and shots fired data to refine hot spot policing.

“This timely information helps ‘identify who are the most prolific firearm offenders so we can come up with appropriate law enforcement and prosecution strategies based on this data’.”

-Dan Carew, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) sends every NIBIN (National Integrated Ballistic Information Network) lead to the CSU to help coordinate investigations across King County. CSU then works with law enforcement to share incident reports and intelligence in pursuit of solving gun-related crimes.

