

Green Bay, Wisconsin **GUN VIOLENCE PROBLEM ANALYSIS**

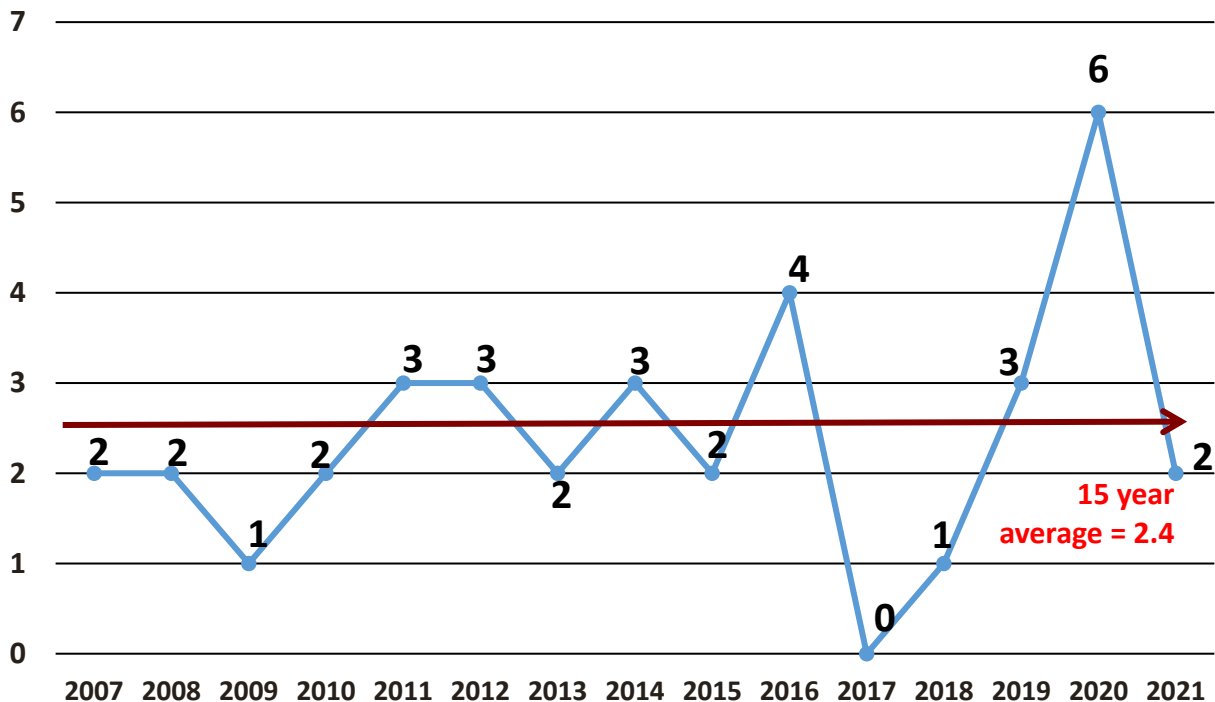
Summary Report | January 2019 - December 2021

Green Bay, WI Gun Violence Problem Analysis Summary Report

The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) partnered with the Green Bay Police Department (GBPD) and other local community corrections agencies to conduct a detailed analysis of shootings and homicides in Green Bay, WI. A Gun Violence Problem Analysis (GVPA) is a set of analytical exercises designed to support the implementation of violence reduction strategies; the GVPA is a research-based methodology used in several cities nationally.

Green Bay’s homicide rate is consistently lower than the U.S. average – about half the national rate. The 10-year average homicide rate in Green Bay is 2.3 per 100,000 population, and its homicide occurrences are often about equal to or lower than the Wisconsin statewide homicide rate. Like many U.S. cities, Green Bay experienced an increase in fatal violence in 2020, with the number of homicides to six. However, the number of homicides dropped back down to two in 2021 (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Green Bay Homicide Count 2007 -2021



This Gun Violence Problem Analysis examined all homicides ($n = 8$), nonfatal injury shootings ($n = 23$), and all shots fired incidents ($n = 129$) between January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2021. Accidental self-inflictions, officer-involved shootings and cases of justified self-defense were excluded from our sample. The goal of this analysis is to examine the circumstances of the event itself, explore the characteristics of individuals involved, and identify the networks associated with the highest risk of violence. This work establishes a common understanding of the local violence problem that can help guide policy, tailor interventions to those at the highest risk of violence, and inform the work of civic, community, and criminal justice leaders to reduce gun violence in Green Bay.

Before summarizing these findings, it is important to define several terms used throughout this report:

- **Homicide:** In this report, the term “homicide” refers to criminal homicides in which a killing was intentional or due to criminal negligence (i.e., murder or manslaughter).
- **Nonfatal Shooting:** In this report, “nonfatal shooting” refers to shooting incidents involving criminal intent in which a victim was struck by a bullet discharged from a firearm, resulting in a nonfatal injury
- **Shots Fired:** Shots fired incidents refer to shooting incidents in which a bullet was discharged from a firearm, but no victims were struck by gunfire.
- **Group:** We use the term group to refer to the wide range of dynamics and structures present in criminally active street groups. Individuals at high risk for violence are likely to associate within particular groups and social networks, ranging from more highly organized, formal gangs to more loosely associated, informal neighborhood crews. Labels aside, attention to groups is important because criminally active groups, gangs, crews, and social networks tend to drive a substantial amount of violence.

Finally, due to low overall counts of homicides and nonfatal shootings ($n=31$), this analysis also examines the people involved and circumstances of shots fired incidents in which no victims were struck by bullets. It is important to note that the designated “victims” of such incidents are those whom investigators established as the (a) intended targets of gunfire based on motive and physical evidence, and/or (b) actual targets of gunfire based on property damage (e.g., to vehicles). As a result, characteristics of shots fired victims should be interpreted with caution.

Victims and Suspects of Homicides and Nonfatal Shootings

Demographics

The victims and suspects of homicides and nonfatal shootings in the Green Bay are primarily male, Black, and between the ages of 18-34. Nearly 90% of victims and suspects in homicides/shootings and 66% of victims and suspects in shots fired incidents were male. **About 55% of victims and suspects in homicides/shootings and 62% of victims and suspects in shots**

fired incidents were Black, despite Black residents comprising only 4% percent of the overall population in the city (Table 1). Approximately **76% of homicide/shooting victims and suspects and 72% of shots fired victim and suspects were between the ages of 18-34**, with a mean age of 28.1 and 29.4, respectively (Table 2).

Table 1. Homicide and Nonfatal Shooting Victims and Suspects: Sex and Race

	HOMICIDES & SHOOTINGS (N=31)			GREEN BAY POPULATION
	Victims (n=37)	Suspects (n=43)	Victims & Suspects (n=80)	
Sex				
Male	83.3%	95.4%	89.9%	49.6%
Female	16.7%	4.7%	10.1%	50.4%
Race				
Black	57.6%	52.4%	54.7%	4.2%
White	15.2%	14.3%	18.7%	68.7%
Hispanic	21.2%	16.7%	18.7%	15.8%
Asian	6.1%	2.4%	4.0%	4.2%
Other	0.0%	14.3%	8.0%	

Table 2. Homicide and Nonfatal Shooting Victims and Suspects: Age

	HOMICIDES & SHOOTINGS (N=31)		
	Victims (n=37)	Suspects (n=43)	Victims & Suspects (n=80)
Age			
17 & under	2.7%	9.3%	6.3%
18-24	35.1%	37.2%	36.3%
25-34	43.2%	37.2%	40.0%
35-44	18.9%	11.6%	15.0%
45-54	0.0%	2.3%	1.3%
55 and older	0.0%	2.3%	1.3%
Mean Age	28.9	27.4	28.1

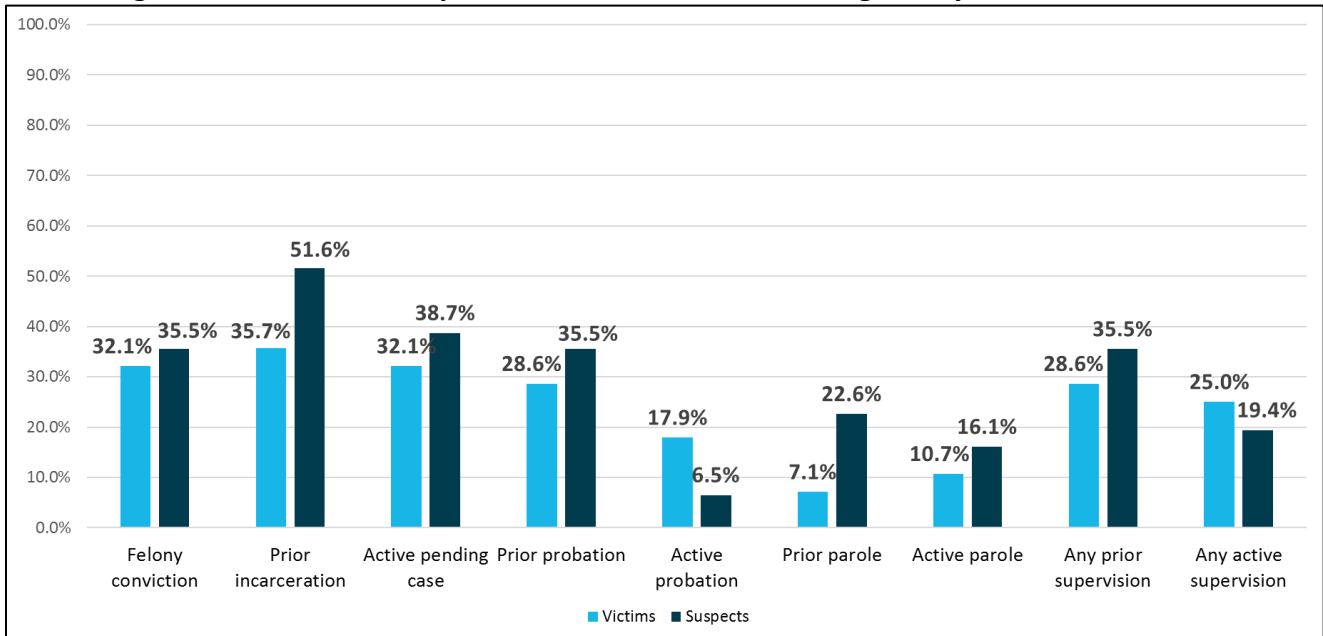
Criminal Justice System Involvement

A victim or suspect was noted to have prior criminal justice system involvement if they were arrested in Green Bay, regardless of conviction, prior to their involvement in the gun violence event. Prior arrests and felony arrests count the unique arrest events. Offense totals count the number of unique criminal offense types, even if they occurred within the same arrest event. For example, someone arrested for burglary, who also possessed drugs when arrested and was charged with both burglary and drugs possession, would be counted as one arrest but two offenses.

Approximately 75% percent of homicide and shooting victims and suspects were known to the criminal justice system prior to the incident. Among victims and suspects with prior arrests, about 44% had been previously incarcerated (Figure 2). Of all victims and suspects, 29.7% of victims and 38.1% of suspects were previously incarcerated prior to the shooting incident.

At least 22% of all homicide and shooting victims and suspects were under active supervision at the time of the incident and about 32% had previously been under supervision (i.e., probation or parole). **At least 44% of all victims and suspects had been under any prior or active supervision.** At the time of the incident, 32% of victims and 39% of suspects had active pending criminal cases.

Figure 2. Victims and Suspects of Homicides and Shootings: CJ System Involvement

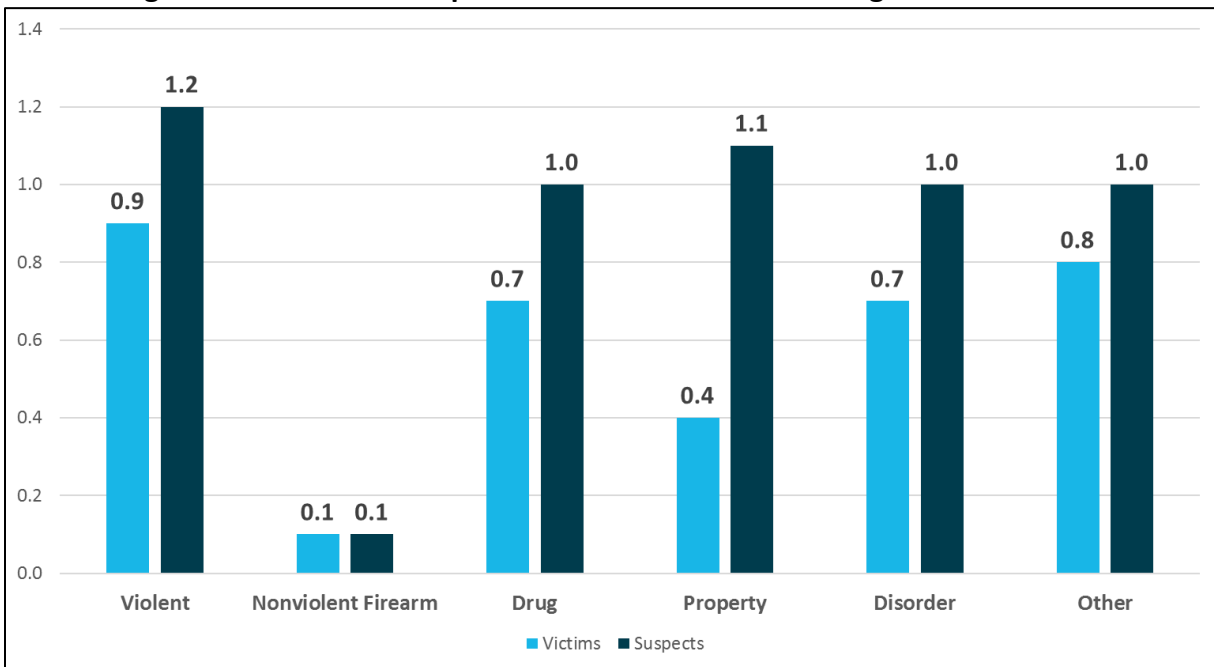


Similarly, about 68% of shots fired victims and suspects were known to the criminal justice system prior to the incident. Of those, about 49% had previously been incarcerated. At least 32% were

on active supervision at the time of the incident, and about 46% had previously been on probation or parole. At the time of the incident, 28% of victims and 25% of suspects had active pending criminal cases.

Victims and suspects of homicides and shootings were remarkably similar in terms of the average number and type of prior criminal offenses. Of those who were known to the criminal justice system prior to the incident, most victims and suspects had been arrested for violent (avg. 1.1) or disorder (avg. 0.9), though most criminal activity was spread relatively evenly across offense categories (Figure 3). **Overall, most victims and suspects with prior criminal offenses had been arrested in Green Bay about 4.3 times for about 4.5 different offenses by the time of the homicide or shooting.** Of these, about 1.4 arrests included felony charges. Statewide, victims and suspects had an average of 1.7 prior misdemeanor criminal cases and 1.6 prior felony cases.

Figure 3. Victims and Suspects of Homicides and Shootings: Prior Offenses



Similar patterns of criminal justice system involvement were found among shots fired victims and suspects. Of those who were known to the criminal justice system prior to the event, most had been arrested for disorder (avg. 1.3), drug (avg. 1.2), and property offenses (avg. 1.0). Victims and suspects with prior criminal offenses had been arrested in Green Bay about 4.9 times for 5.4 different offenses by the time of the shots fired incident. Of these, about 2.1 arrests included felony charges. Statewide, victims and suspects had an average of 1.4 prior misdemeanor criminal cases and 1.7 prior felony cases.

Incident Analysis

Homicides

This section analyzes the circumstances of homicide and shooting events from January 2019 – December 2021 (N=31). About 42% of homicides and shootings were confirmed to involve group members as victims, suspects, or both, and in another 19% of incidents, the group involvement of victims and/or suspects was unknown. Therefore, at least 42% and potentially up to 61% of homicides involved group members as victims, suspects, or both, though the exact percentage is unknown.

This analysis collected homicide and shooting circumstance information from case summaries and detective interviews (Table 3). Homicides and shootings most often occurred as a result of drug-related disputes (22.6 percent) and personal disputes between known individuals (19.4 percent). Group members were involved in a significant share of both drug-related (71.4 percent) and personal disputes (50.0 percent).

Table 3. Homicide and Shooting Circumstances and Group Involvement

	All Circumstances		Proportion Group-Member Involved	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Drug-related dispute	7	22.6%	5	71.4%
Personal dispute	6	19.4%	3	50.0%
Group-related dispute	4	12.9%	4	100%
Instant dispute	4	12.9%	1	25.0%
Domestic dispute	3	9.7%	0	-
Robbery	2	6.5%	1	50.0%
Drug robbery	1	3.2%	0	-
Mental illness	1	3.2%	0	-
Unknown	3	9.7%	0	-

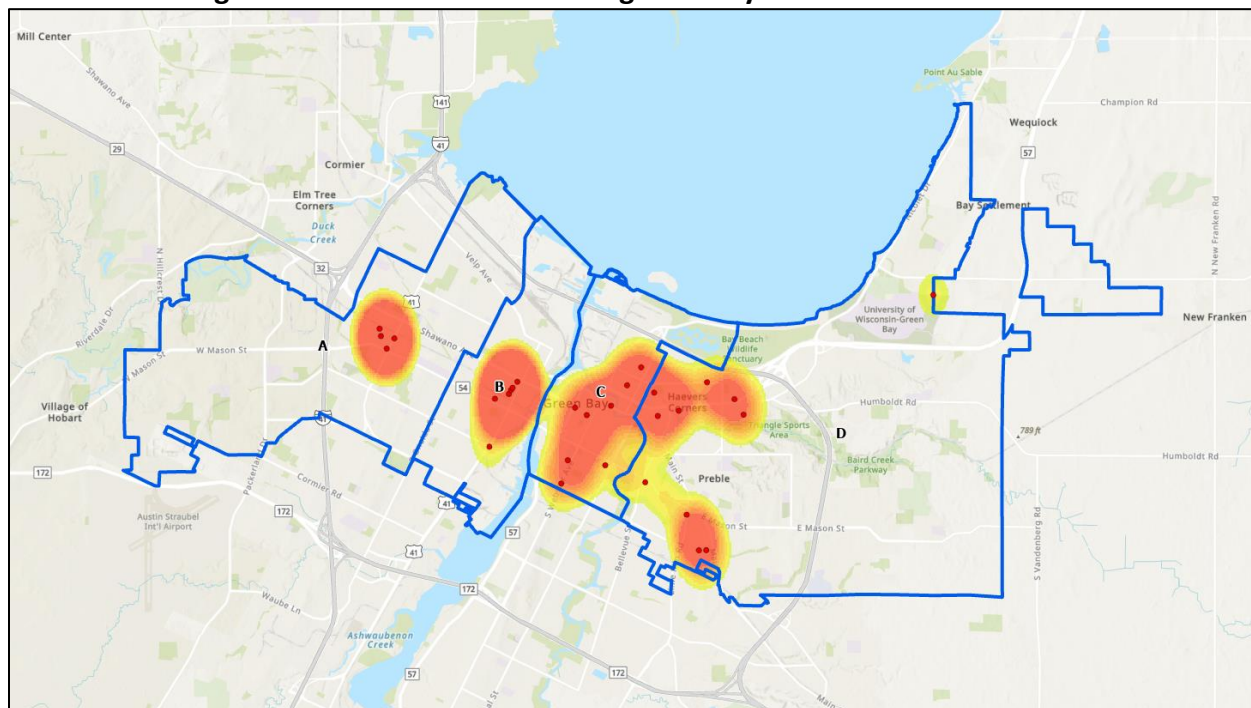
Shots Fired Incidents

Between 32-93% of shots fired incidents from January 2019 – December 2021 (N=82) involved group members as victims, suspects, or both, though the exact percentage is unknown.

This analysis collected shots fired circumstance information from case summaries and data provided by detectives. Shots fired most often evolved from group-related disputes (23.2 percent), personal disputes (13.4 percent), and drug-related disputes (7.3 percent). However, three suspects associated with one group perpetrated a series of 16 shots fired incidents

targeting another group from 11/19/21 – 12/10/21, and this inflates the prevalence of group-related motives among shots fired events.

Figure 4. Homicides and Shootings January 2019 – December 2021



High-Risk Groups and Networks

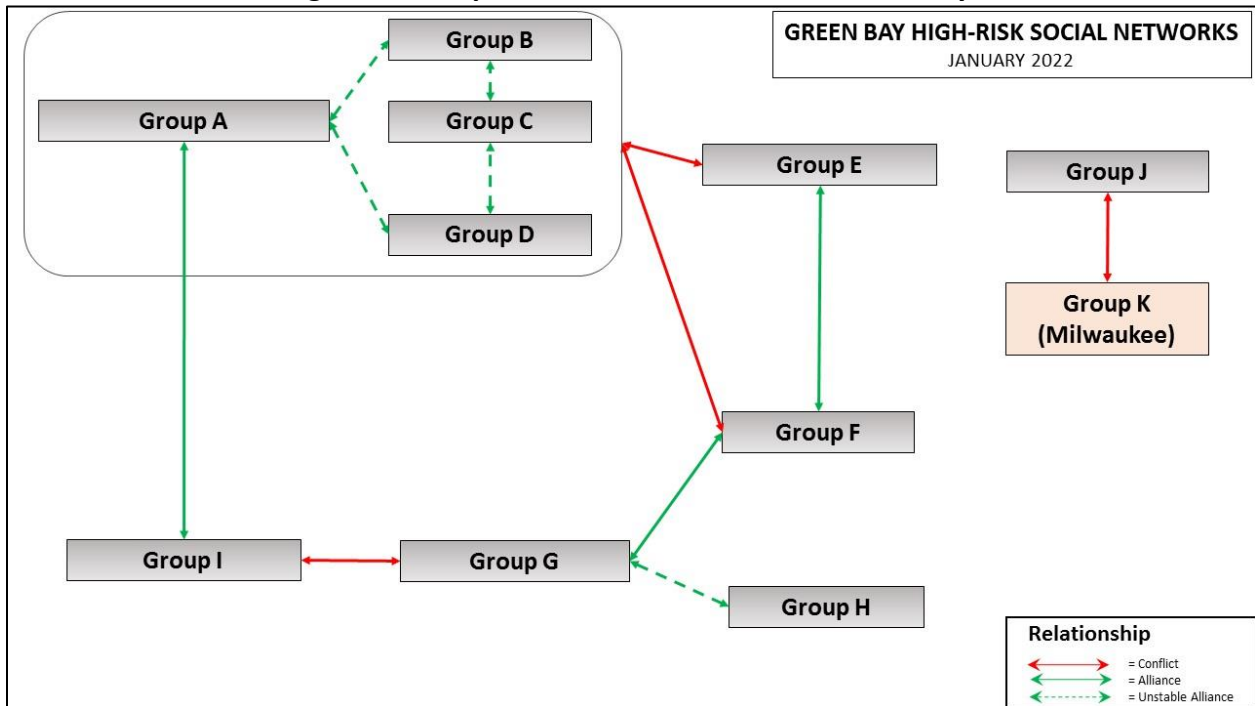
In homicides and shootings, between 31-36% of victims and **49-58% of identified suspects were group-involved**. In shots fired events, between 14-77% of victims and 42-82% of identified suspects were group-involved, but due to less information being available about shots fired incidents, more precise percentages are not known.

At least 11 groups were identified by GBPD personnel as actively involved in violence in the city (Figure 5). Of those, **7 groups were involved in two or more homicides, shootings, or shots fired events** during the study period.

Most active groups/gangs in Green Bay are informal cliques centering around family and neighborhood ties. These groups are relatively fragmented and unstructured, and relationships within and among these groups are also more unstable and volatile. Most of these groups are generating profit through drug sales – primarily marijuana with a recent growth in opioids like Percocet and OxyContin. Some groups have also recently escalated their involvement in motor vehicle theft.

GBPD personnel noted that connections to friends and family in regional cities that have stronger People Nation/Folk gang ties have resulted in the growth of hybrid gangs within Green Bay. Many group-associated individuals in the city may claim GD/BD though they may not actively associate and participate with those gangs. Instead, they may have family members, often outside the city, who have strong GD/BD ties. These individuals will then sometimes end up in GD/BD-linked feuds in Green Bay either because they have these known familial connections, because they false flag and claim particular gangs, or both. Figure 5 below depicts actual group feuds and alliances but the names of the groups have been anonymized.

Figure 5. Group Conflicts and Alliances in Green Bay



Summary Findings and Recommendations

In Green Bay, most gun violence is tightly concentrated on a small number of very high risk young Black male adults that share a common set of risk factors like involvement in street crews/groups and significant criminal justice history, including prior or active community supervision and/or active pending criminal cases.

While many of the people involved in gun violence, as victims or suspects, are members or associates of street groups/gangs, the motive for the shooting may not be a traditional gang war. Often shootings are precipitated by a petty conflict over a young woman, a simple argument, or a feud on social media. Those involved in groups/gangs are also involved in a range of other criminal activities (e.g., drug selling, robbery) that lead to an increased risk of involvement in violence.

While the contexts of gun violence are variable and complex, this confluence of common risk factors suggests that a significant portion of violence in Green Bay could be reduced with collaborative and hyper-focused intervention strategies. Several key recommendations emerge from this analysis:

Recommendations

1) Create a Gun Violence Reduction Unit

Create a Gun Violence Reduction Unit (GVRU) within GBPD that focuses communication, attention, and investigative resources on the small number of people at the very highest risk of gun violence in the city.

1A) Improve intelligence gathering

Through the new GVRU but also throughout GBPD, improve intelligence gathering and data collection to better understand gun and group violence dynamics. Keeping in mind the legal parameters, systems and processes should be developed to improve the GBPD's ability to detect and respond to group-related criminal activity and emerging patterns of violence.

2) Implement a Gun Violence Reduction Strategy

- Institute a regular review of shootings that identify incidents with high likelihood of retaliation and identify individuals at very high risk of being involved in gun violence.
- GBPD, prosecutors and other law enforcement partners should work collaboratively to apply swift enforcement actions for the small number of people involved in gun violence.
- Partner with community organizations that provide violence intervention services and refer individuals at very high risk of gun violence who do not face imminent arrest to those organizations.

3) Increase investment in community based services

The City of Green Bay should invest funds to further develop and expand community based violence intervention services.