



Violence Reduction Initiative

City of Kansas City, Missouri, Violence Reduction Initiative

Sept. 2023

STAT – **S**trategic **T**errain-based **A**ction **T**eam – A citywide, multi-disciplinary team created to reduce violent crime, in which the police department works alongside county prosecutors, federal authorities, and various city departments and agencies.

Beginning in mid-2023, leadership from every city convened on a regular basis to better use data-informed strategies and collaborated on tackling the city's most significant challenges. With rates of violent crime reaching all-time peaks, this group came together by posing the question, "What can we collectively do to make our city's residents safer?"

The goal of aligning institutional and governmental departments is to more rapidly, effectively and holistically respond to community concerns. Fundamentally, this approach requires us to:

- 1) Democratize the use of data and analytics**
- 2) Empower community organizations to become co-producers of public safety**
- 3) Mobilize community resources and expertise to problem-solve Kansas City's most pressing violent crime issues**

Increased interventions, both through law enforcement and city staff, expand the social service resources available to individuals, families and neighborhoods that are at the highest risk of violence.

Law enforcement strategies are being implemented across the following six areas:

- 1) Created the **Community Engagement Division** (CED), which unified and streamlined Kansas City Police Department (KCPD) services like social workers and the crisis intervention team. The CED is comprised of KCPD's social workers, Crisis Intervention Team Officers, Crime Free Multi-Housing Officers, Community Interaction Officers, and chaplains.
- 2) Reimplemented a **focused deterrence approach**. The goal of focused deterrence is to change the behavior of high-risk offenders through a combination of deterrence, arrest when needed, community involvement, and the provision of alternatives to violence. Keys to the approach are clear communication with violent offenders regarding the risks of continued violent activity, and presenting available alternatives through social services, education and job/workforce development opportunities.
- 3) Established the **Illegal Firearm Squad**. This squad works closely with federal, state and local law enforcement partners to investigate law violations and remove illegal firearms.
- 4) Reestablished the **Missing Person Unit**. 7 detectives and 1 sergeant are assigned to this unit, which is dedicated to finding missing persons and

runaways. Daily tracking of victims was implemented with regular public reporting of missing persons.¹

- 5) **Shared Neighborhood Crime Data** to deter crime by improving constructed environments. Increasing coordination with other city departments to implement a vacant lot “greening” program, and also a vacant/dilapidated building abatement strategy.² The KCPD, alongside the city’s broader multi-disciplinary team, utilize crime analysis and Risk Terrain Modeling (RTM)³ to increase public safety.
- 6) Considering **shifting staff schedules** to optimize the deployment of patrol officers.

City departments are prioritizing violence intervention work in the following six areas:

- 1) Created a **Multidisciplinary Public Safety Task Force**, which aligns and implements environmental solutions to reduce repeated violent incidents in concentrated areas.
- 2) **311 reporting**, a place-based analysis of where citizens are identifying needs and improvements (such as: abandoned houses, trash, blight, and other quality of life issues), which expands utilization of 311 data for prevention and intervention purposes. Violent crime locations often correlate with resident-generated reports of city services requests.
- 3) Considering innovative improvements that could **streamline the 911 emergency call system**.
- 4) **Outreach to non-fatal shooting victims and those most likely to shoot or be shot** to offer access to restorative social services in hopes of preventing future incidents.
- 5) **Violence interruptors** through the Health Department’s Aim4Peace program have increased by 30 percent with a new Hispanic response team.
- 6) **Neighborhood Pilot Grant** Program offering mini-grants to 13 neighborhoods for up to \$20,000 per neighborhood to improve the built environment.

Prepared by



¹ <https://www.kcpd.org/crime/crime-statistics/>

² A growing body of literature associates urban blight and crime, including violent crime (Kondo et al., 2015; Branas et al., 2016; Branas et al., 2018).

³ <https://www.rutgerscps.org/rtm-intro.html>