



National Institute for  
Criminal Justice Reform

**CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIP  
FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES**

## **WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE:**

# **OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL RESEARCH EVIDENCE AND BEST PRACTICE**

FOR PORTLAND LOCAL PUBLIC  
SAFETY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
MEETING

[www.nicjr.org](http://www.nicjr.org)

[www.theCApartnership.org](http://www.theCApartnership.org)

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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- 1.) **Who are we, why we are here, and what information we hope to provide**
- 2.) **Present what works in reducing gun violence on a community level – from national research and our experience**
- 3.) ***Briefly* illustrate these principles and practices at work in the Oakland Ceasefire story**

# Why We Are Here

- **June 21, 2018 visit to Oakland**
- **December 2018 California Community of Practice Convening (featuring Los Angeles, Oakland, and Stockton)**
- **2019 Site Visits**
  - April- Observation
  - May- Problem Analysis

# Portland: Initial Observations

- **Excellent Foundation of Partnership**
- **Good Working Relationship Between Partners (MOYVP, PPB, County, and Providers)**



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## **WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE:**

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# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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1. Present what works in reducing gun violence on a community level – from national research and our experience
2. Illustrate these principles and practices at work in the Oakland Ceasefire story
3. Q&A and Discussion

# IMPORTANT FRAMING

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1. **Gun violence is the most serious public safety problem that cities face.**
2. **It creates irreversible harm, is incredibly expensive and drives our criminal justice and community safety practice and policy.**
3. **Gun violence is a problem that we can do something about in the near-term.** This requires a focus on those at highest risk of violence now.
4. **Our goal for this presentation is to review “key ingredients” that are the most important in reducing gun violence**



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**RESEARCH:  
The Impact of Various  
Strategies on Community  
Violence**

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# Strategy: Why Research Matters (1)

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- **Rigorous research is really the combination of the experience of communities and good social science.**
- **If we really care about making progress on a problem, we have to understand the research.**
- **What is the problem actually? What have people tried? What has worked and what hasn't? What questions remain?**

# Preventio

Long-term violence reduction strategies like mentoring at-risk middle school students or life skills workshops for youth

Investment

Results  
5-10 years

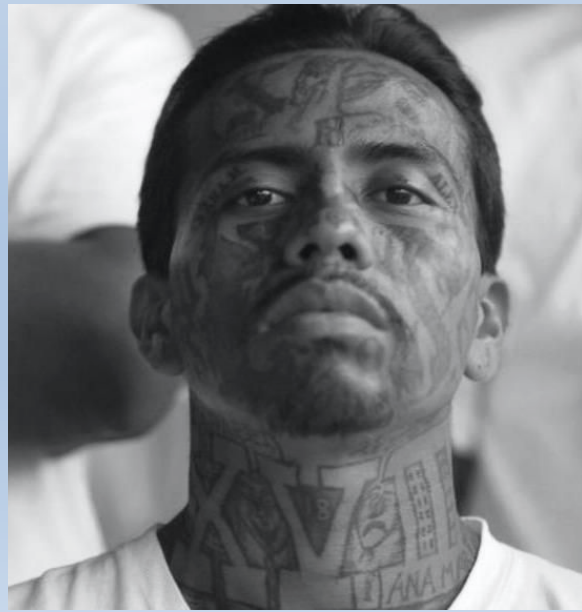


# Interventio

Violence reduction in the short term, like harm reduction strategies (Ceasefire)

Investment

Results  
1-3 years



# Transformati

Transforming communities so that they do not induce violence:

- Wholesale education reform and investment
- Economic development
- Neighborhood revitalization

Investment

Results  
15-20 years



# Overall Strategy: Research Matters (2)

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We work primarily from the “focused deterrence” / Group Violence Reduction framework, for several reasons:

- A large body of research evidence supports its effectiveness in reducing violence. (25 evaluations, 2 meta-reviews).
- It has been repeatedly shown to reduce community violence and individual recidivism in variety of different cities.
- It's an effective way to mobilize police, justice system, community and social service actors to work together to reduce gun violence in the near-term.
- *Note:* Timeline and likely impact of gang prevention versus violence reduction/intervention.

# Summary of the Literature on Gang Prevention (from OJJDP):

- Howell's (1998) review of the literature reveals that **“nothing has been demonstrated through rigorous evaluation to be effective in preventing or reducing serious and violent gang delinquency.”**
- Spergel's (1995) independent review: “[T]raditional social intervention programs, ....**have shown little effect or may even have worsened the youth gang problem.**”
- **G.R.E.A.T:** shows no significant differences between treatment group and control group **on any of the general delinquency or violent offending outcomes.**
- **Little Village** evaluation\* (2003) appeared to reduce arrests for violence and drug crimes but not for property crimes or **total arrests** and showed **increases in the neighborhood's overall levels of gang violence.**

# Outreach and Support: Related Research

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There is not established best practice for highest risk of violence clients. Yet, the research does offer some guidance.

## 1. Increasing Safety and Reducing Recidivism:

- Evaluations of street outreach have mixed results for individual and community outcomes. (Cure Violence, Boston Safe Streets, Little Village, prior evals 1960s)
- Direct communication (Ceasefire) has been shown to significantly reduce general and violent recidivism (Chicago PSN, Boston BRI)
- Interventions focused on improved decision making (CBT) – when done well -- show significant impacts on subsequent recidivism.

## 2. Accessing Opportunity:

- Evaluations of “traditional” reentry programs find minimal impact on employment or CJ outcomes for CJ-involved population (CEO, Ready for Work, Safer Return, Project Greenlight, MDRC Rev., etc.).

# Social Networks Bring Risk

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Research is increasingly clear that the concentration of violence within social networks is a key factor in addressing gun violence.

- The risk of future gun shot victimization is highly influenced by the composition of an individuals' social network.
- The more people someone is connected to who are victims or perpetrators of shootings, the higher their risk.
- The average time to a retaliation shooting once someone is “infected” is about 125 days.

Violence prevention efforts that account for social contagion (risk as a feature of networks), will be better able to prevent more shootings than efforts that focus on only demographics.

# Violence Reduction Best Practice: What Matters

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- **Generating political will and leadership to reduce violence**
- **Using an evidence-based strategy**
- **Understanding the problem of violence and focusing on those at very highest risk of violence now**
- **Building devoted infrastructure to reduce violence in the near term**
- **Managing to violence reduction outcomes across partners**
- **Coordination and trust between police, intervention and community members at the very highest risk of violence.**



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# OAKLAND CASE STUDY

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# Oakland Ceasefire GOALS



**Reduce** shootings and homicides



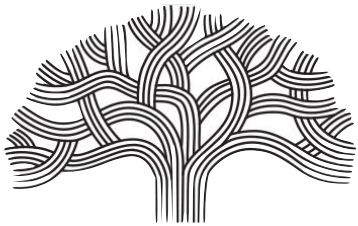
**Decrease** recidivism/arrests and **improve outcomes** for those at highest risk of violence



**Strengthen** police-community relations and trust



# PARTNERSHIPS



CITY OF OAKLAND



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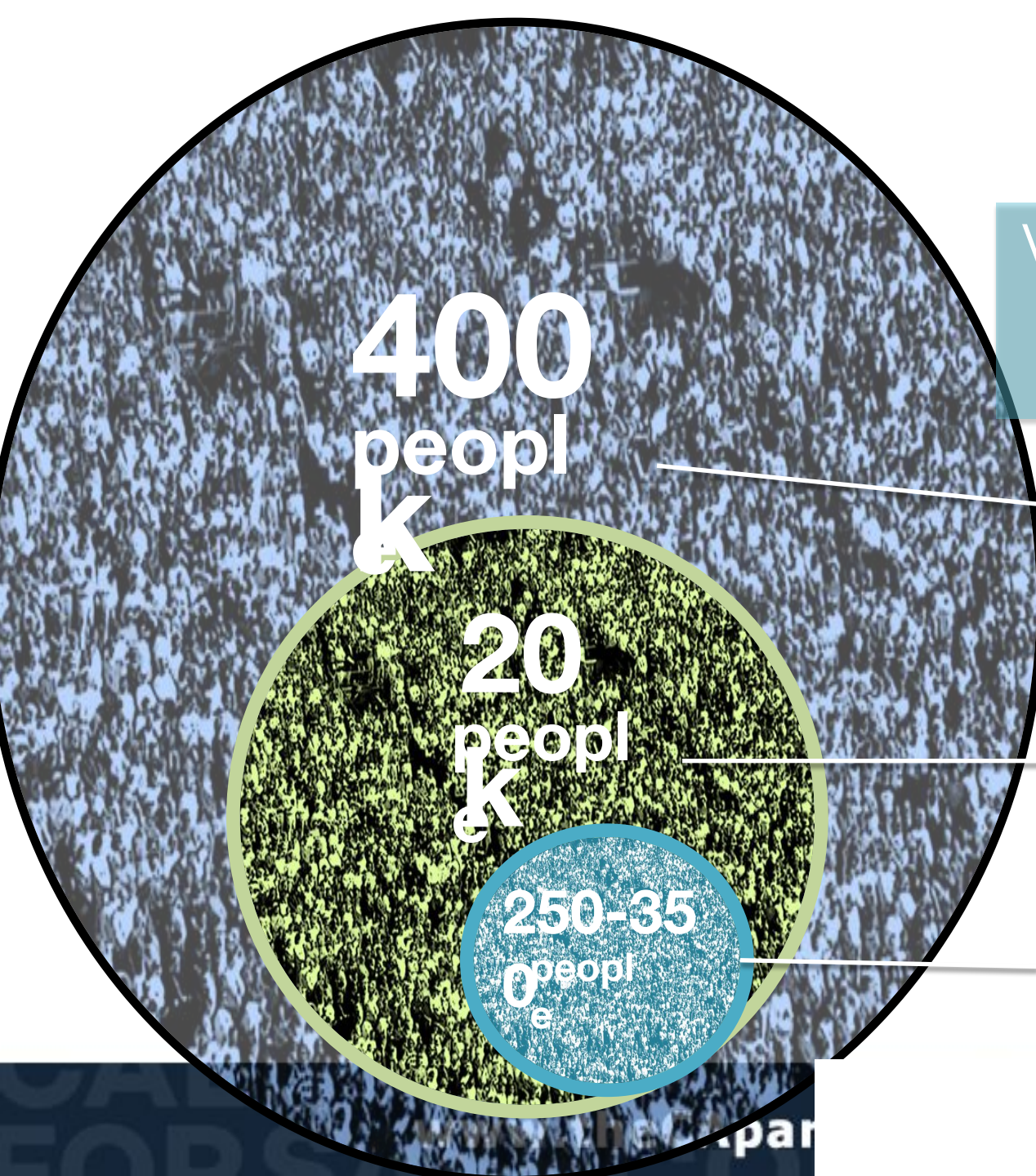
# Problem Analysis Insights: Understanding the Problem

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**What the public and policy makers thought:** Violence primarily driven by juveniles, drugs and economic motives.

## **What the analysis revealed:**

- Homicide primarily driven by specific running group/gang conflicts and personal disputes between group members.
- Those at very highest risk primarily group-involved adult men of color (the average age is 30)
- With heavy justice system involvement (averaging 12 prior arrests at the time of homicide, 7 for felonies) and social connections to actively violent street groups
- Only 10% of homicide involved juveniles, only 13% of homicides had any connection to drugs.



Very High Risk  
Individuals

**OAKLAND'S  
POPULATION**

**CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE  
POPULATION**

**VERY HIGH RISK  
POPULATION**

# Focusing on Very High Risk Individuals Now

- 18-35 year old males
- Significant Criminal Justice involvement
- Associated with an active crew/gang/group
- Has been shot before
- Has a close friend or family member shot in last 12 months





# Oakland Ceasefire Performance Management: Overview

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1. **Shooting Reviews – identify VHR people, hottest conflicts, intervention and enforcement priorities.**



2. **Coordination Meetings – Oakland Unite, OPD, community partners develop near term strategy for these particular people and conflicts – mobilizes life coaches, outreach, crisis response staff and contractors**



3. **Performance Review Meetings – Partners review citywide shootings trends; direct communication; service uptake and caseload; relative to annual and two-month benchmarks**

# Community of Support **for Very High Risk Individuals**

- **Intensive Case Management/Life Coaching**  
(14 Life Coaches)
- **Clients eligible to receive incentivized stipends**
- **Improved coordination between Life Coaches and Employment Support Services**
- **Relocation Support**
- **CBT Groups**
- **Faith Partners: Weekly Night Walks, Holiday Support, Political Support**



OAKLAND

Gun Violence

# Reduction Strategy

## Focused Enforcement

on those who continue to  
engage in gun violence

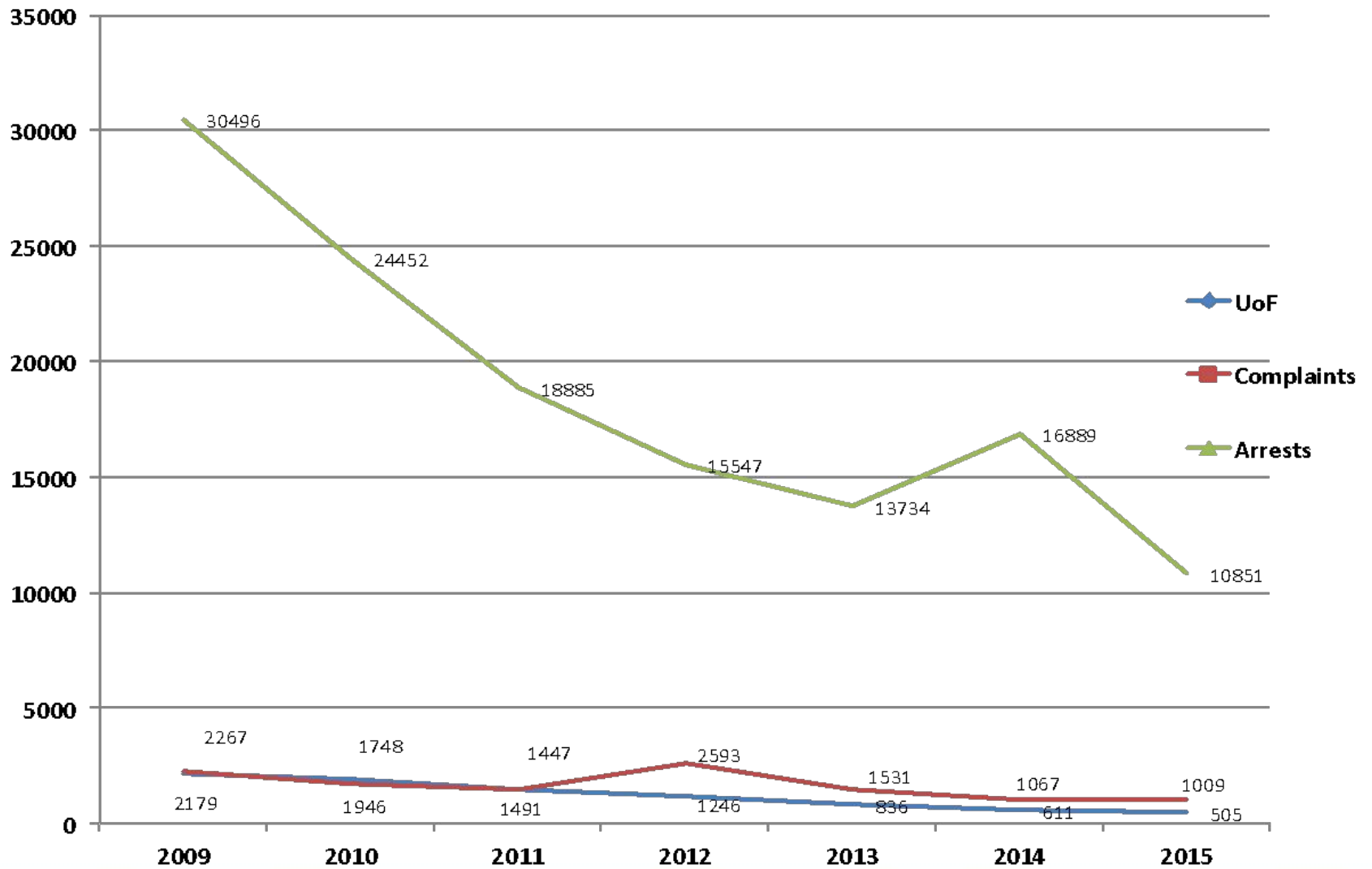


# Trust Building and Procedural

Justice

- **PJ Training for OPD in partnership with community**  
(best practice in state/nation)
- **Focus Groups with VHR clients**
- **Leadership Council**
- **Shooting Scene Re-design**
- **Advanced PJ/CF training for CRTs**
- **Implicit Bias work**

# Shrinking OPD Footprint



# Improved OPD Outcomes



Over the past six years

## ○ Clearance Rate Increased

From **29%** to **71%**

## ○ Complaints

Down **55%**



Over the past six years

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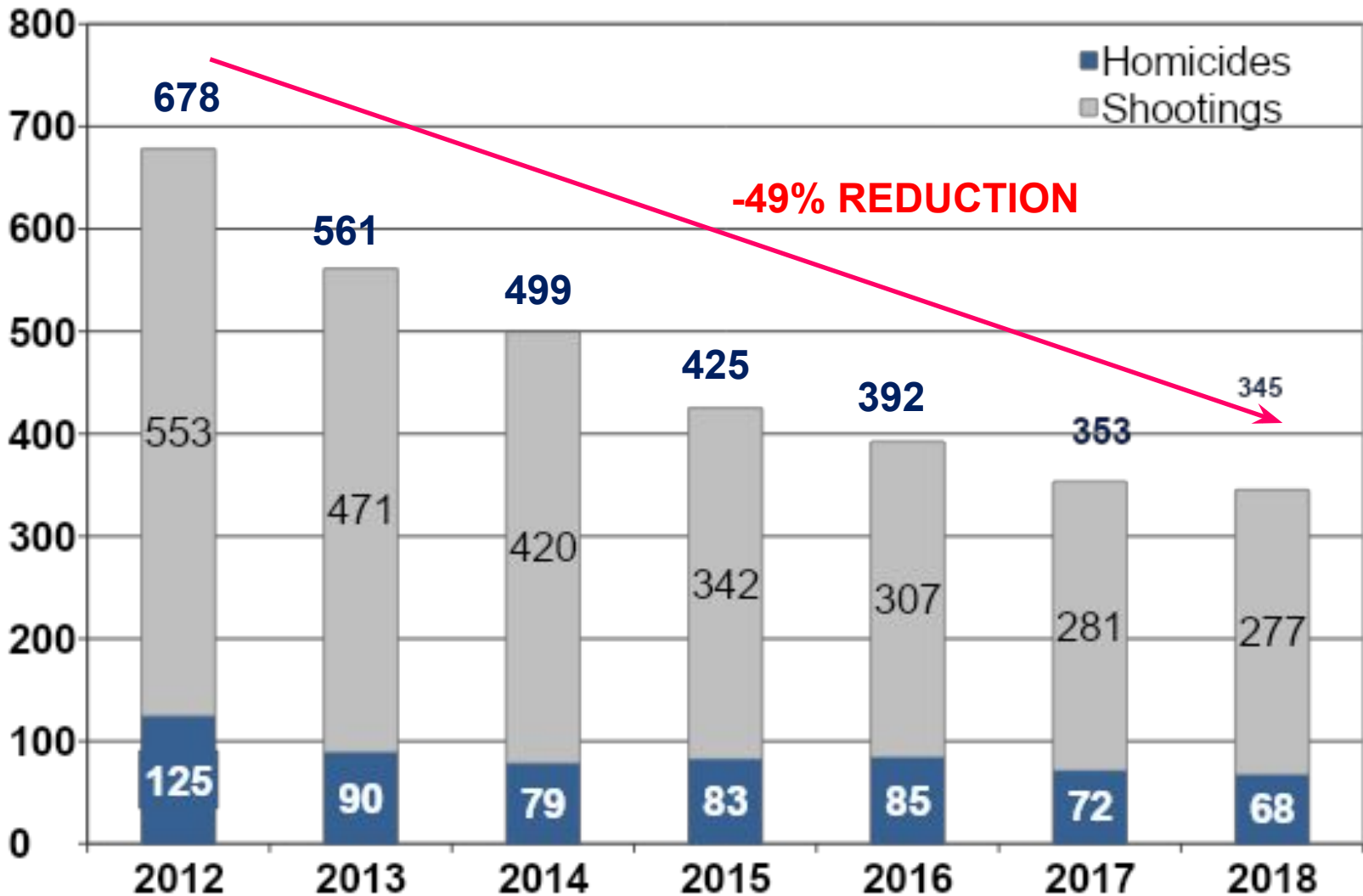


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# **IMPACT ON GUN VIOLENCE**

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# CEASEFIRE Strategy Progress in Oakland 2012-2018



# Effectively Reducing Violence Requires Big System Changes

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Each major component demands a complementary culture change:

1. Deciding what crime(s) you are actually trying to reduce
2. Using data to identify the VHR population across multiple stakeholders.
3. Directly communicating with those at highest risk, and incorporating the principles of procedural justice into this communication.
4. Shifting focus to harm reduction as opposed to conventional service provision, job training, gang prevention etc.
5. Intelligence-based, targeted enforcement to diffuse violence conflicts, informed by the principles of procedural justice.
6. Partners holding each other mutually accountable for quality implementation and outcomes through the use of performance measures.



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# **APPENDIX: OAKLAND IMPACT EVALUATION**

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# Oakland Ceasefire Evaluation

**Collaboration between Northeastern University (Braga, Greg Zimmerman), Northwestern University (Andrew Papachristos), and Rutgers University (Brunson)**

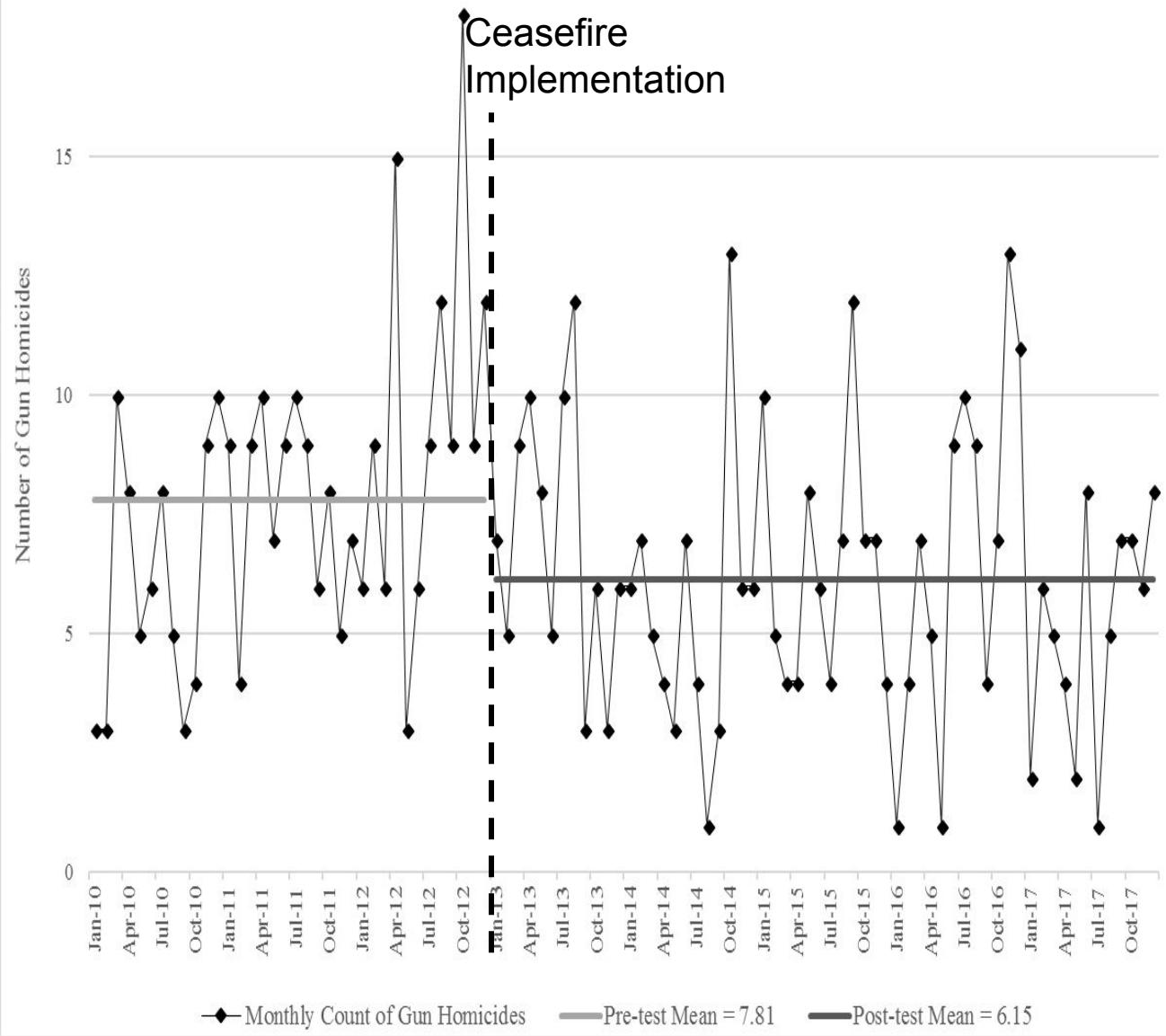
## **4 Key Components / Goals:**

- Place-Based Impact Assessment (COMPLETED)
  - Was Oakland Ceasefire associated with citywide reductions?
  - Did Oakland neighborhoods where Ceasefire was implemented experience reductions?
- Gang / Group Impact Assessment (COMPLETED)
  - Did Ceasefire reduce the shooting behaviors of Oakland gangs /groups?
- Individual Impact Assessment (COMPLETED)
  - Did Ceasefire reduce recidivism by participants?
  - Did Ceasefire reduce violent victimization of participants?
- Community / Service Partner Agencies Perceptions (COMPLETED)
  - Did Ceasefire improve neighborhood safety?
  - Did Ceasefire improve community-police trust?

## **Evaluation was focused on gun homicides and non-fatal shootings**

- Total homicides and non-fatal shootings also analyzed in place-based impact assessment

# Monthly Counts of Gun Homicides in Oakland, 2010 - 2017

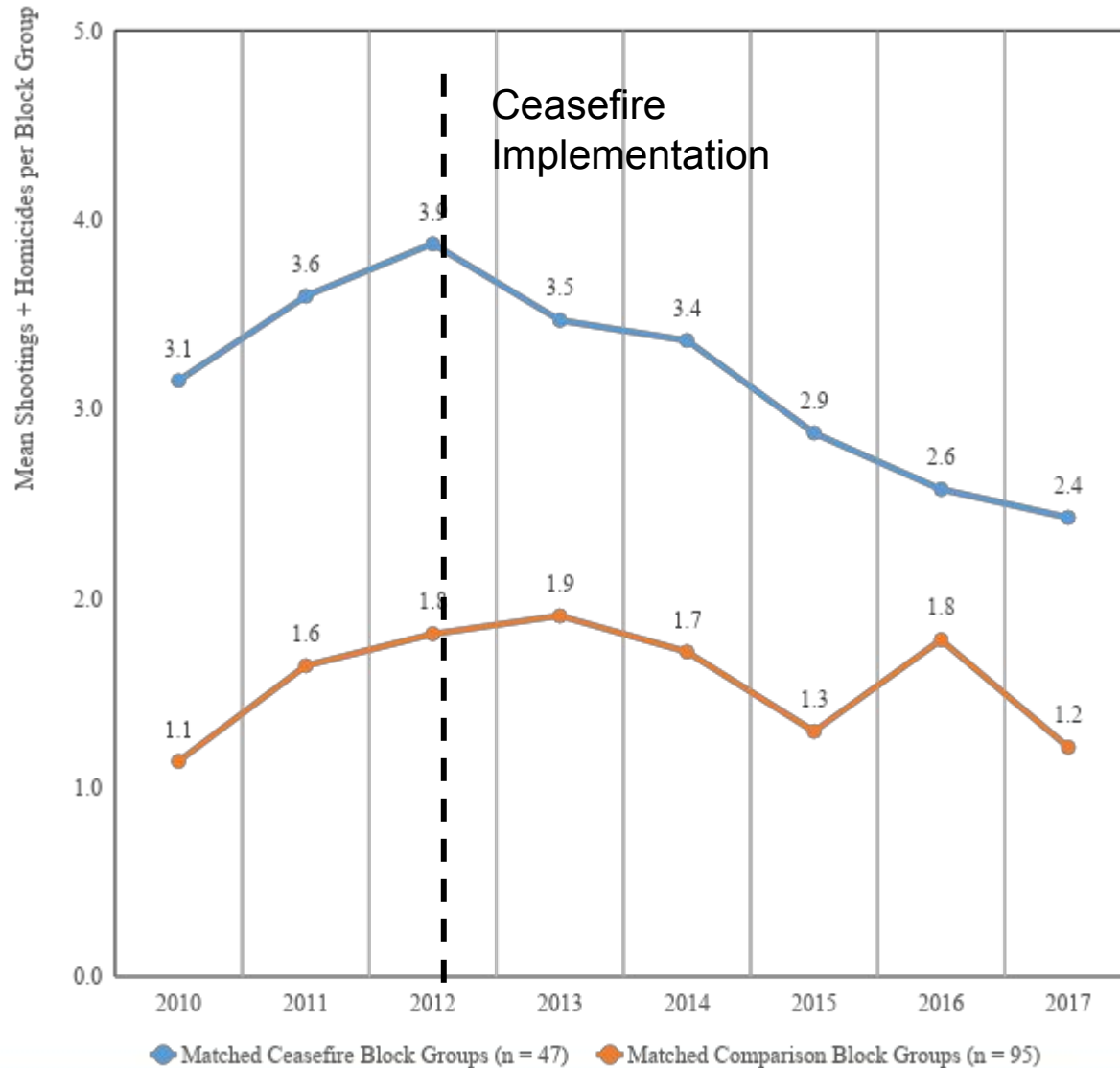


## CROSS-CITY RESULTS

**Estimated 31.5% reduction** controlling for other trends and seasonal variations ( $p < .05$ ).

Only 2 of 12 comparison cities experienced significant reductions during this time period (Stockton, San Francisco).

# Monthly Counts of Shootings in Matched Treated and Untreated Block Groups in Oakland, 2010 - 2017

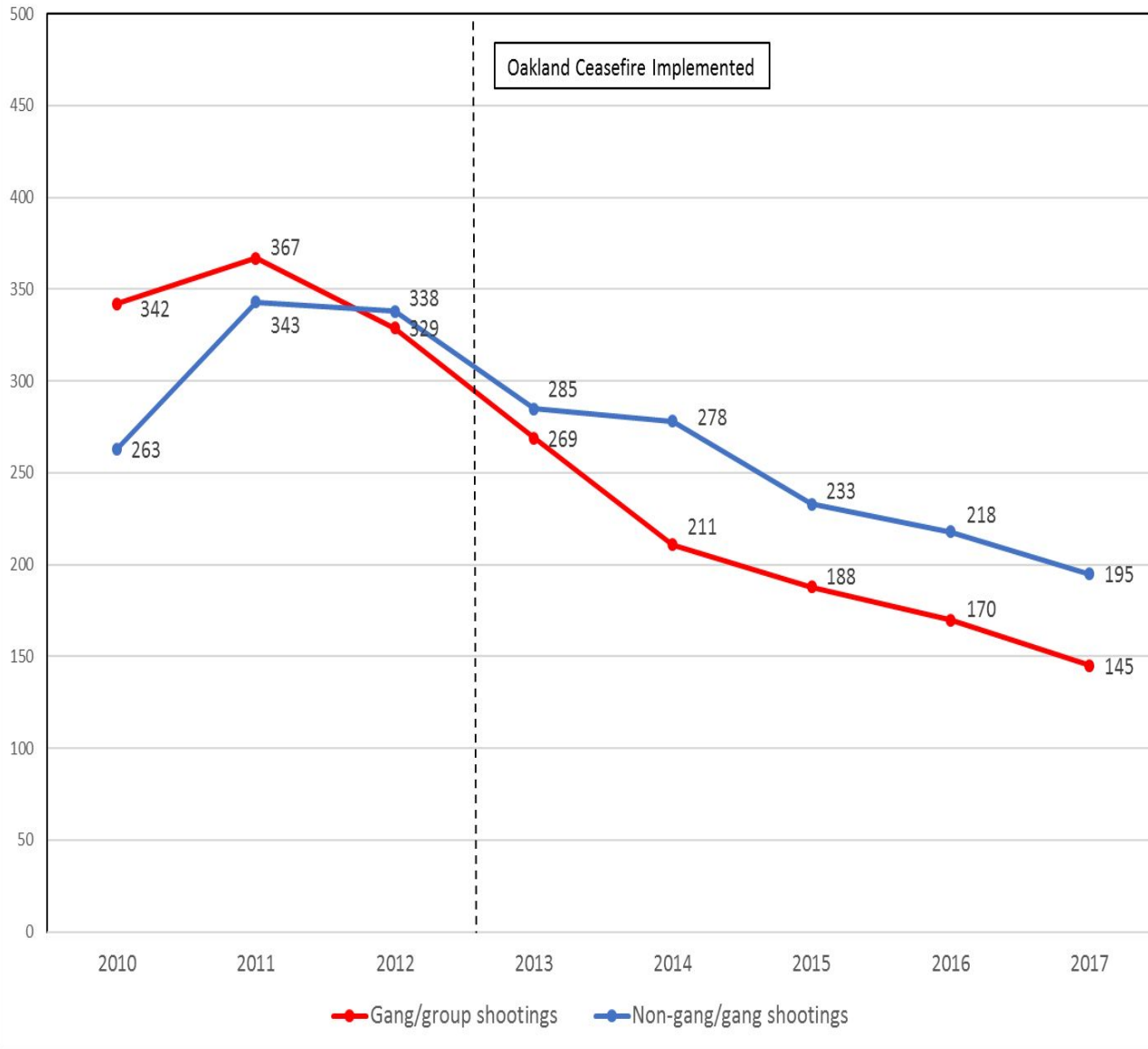


## WITHIN OAKLAND RESULTS

Estimated 20.0% reduction in shootings in treated BGs relative to comparison BGs ( $p < .05$ ).

Non-significant 18.0% reduction in shootings in areas surrounding treated BGs relative to areas surrounding untreated block groups.

Oakland Gang/Group-Member-Involved and Non-Gang/Group-Member-Involved Shootings, 2010-2017



## GMI V. NON-GMI TRENDS

GMI shootings decreased by 43.2% while non-GMI shootings decreased by only 23.2%.

## QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

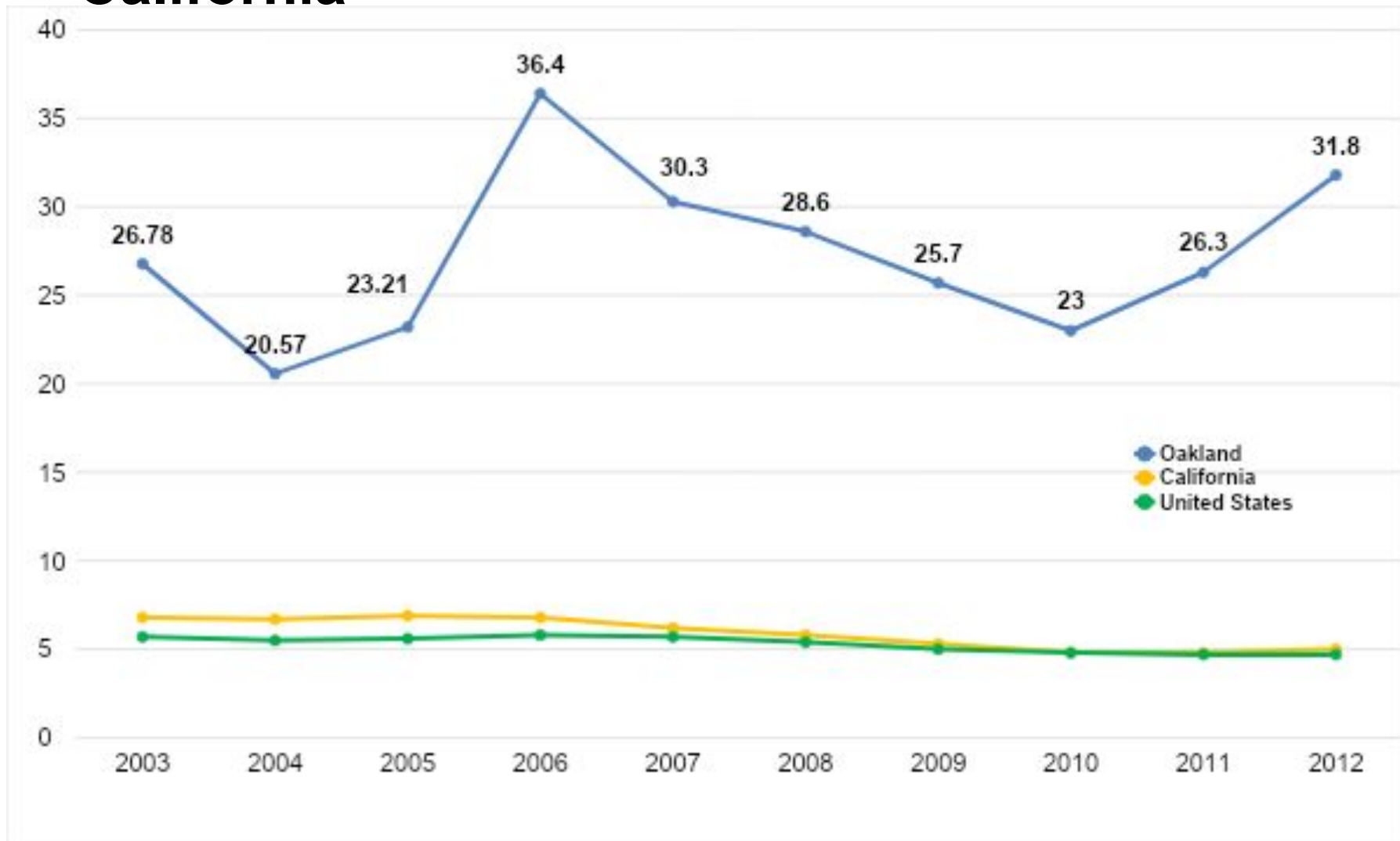
Estimated 27.0% reduction in shootings by treated gangs relative to untreated gangs ( $p < .05$ ).

Estimated 26.0% reduction in shootings by vicariously-treated gangs relative to untreated gangs ( $p < .05$ ).

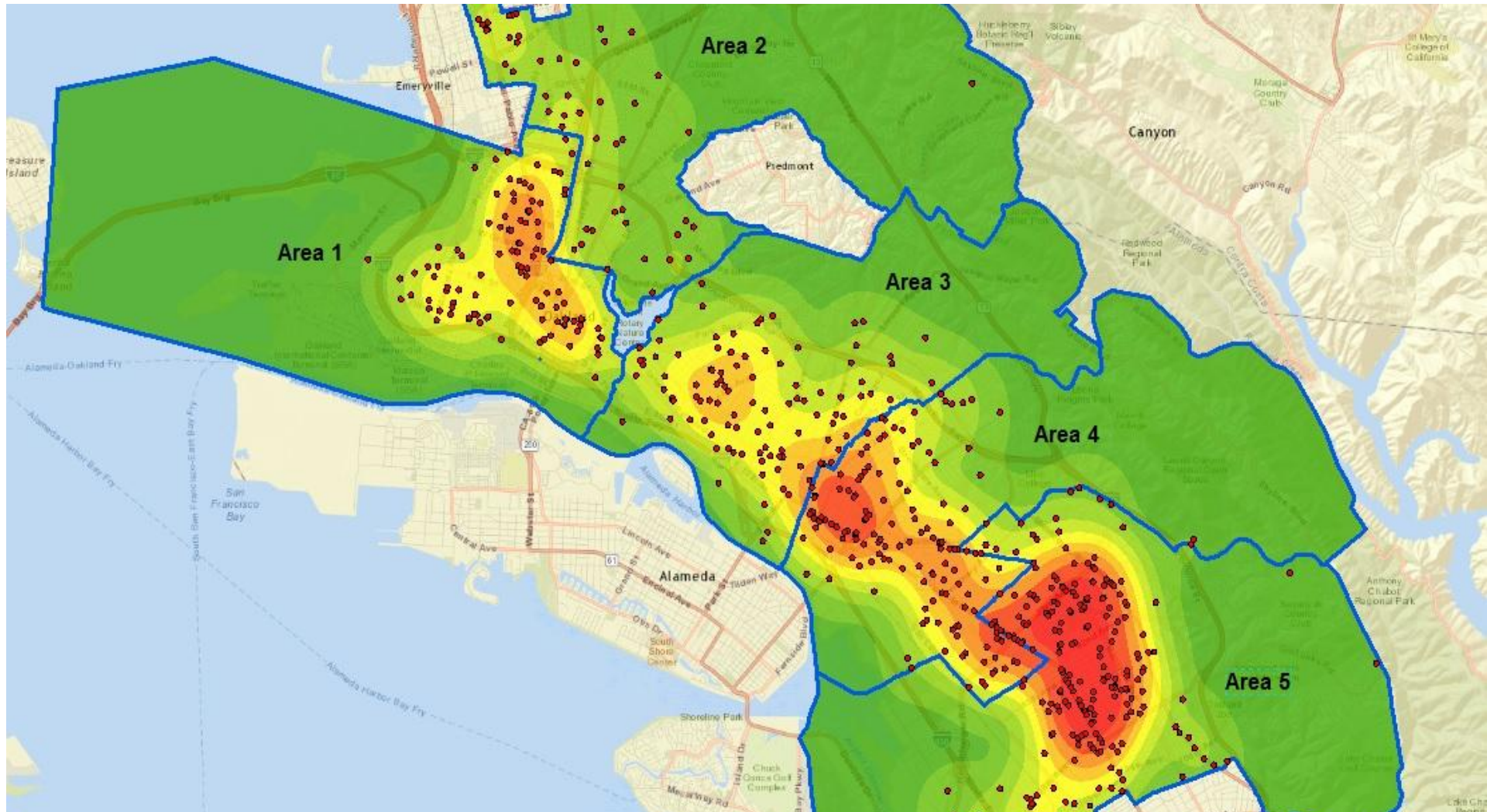
# Oakland's Challenging History of Violence

1. Oakland's problem with violence has stubbornly resisted the national downtrend (prior to 2013).
2. Since 1985, Oakland's murder rate is 4-6 times the national rate. Top 10 most dangerous cities in the country and the most dangerous in California.
3. From 2005-2012, despite a large local investment in violence prevention services and police resources (Measure Y), murders in Oakland increased by 37% while the national rate went down by -16%.
4. Prior to 2012, over the past 40+ years, Oakland has only had one period with consecutive years of fewer than 90 homicides.
5. Like many Bay Area cities, Oakland is undergoing rapid demographic, economic and community changes

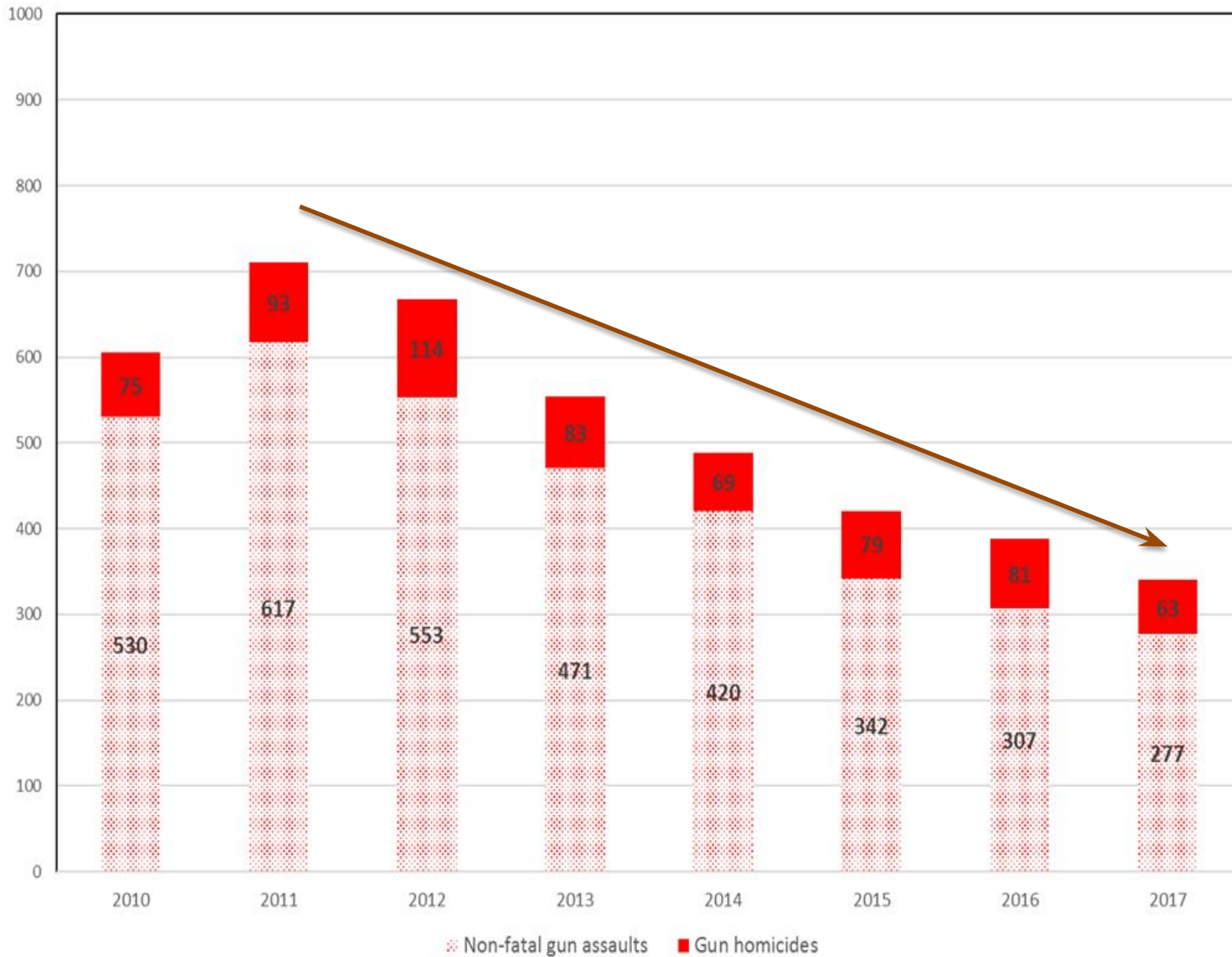
# Murder Rate per 100,000: Oakland v. California



# Understanding the Problem: Homicides & Firearm Assaults\* 2016



## Oakland Fatal and Non-Fatal Shootings, 2010 - 2017

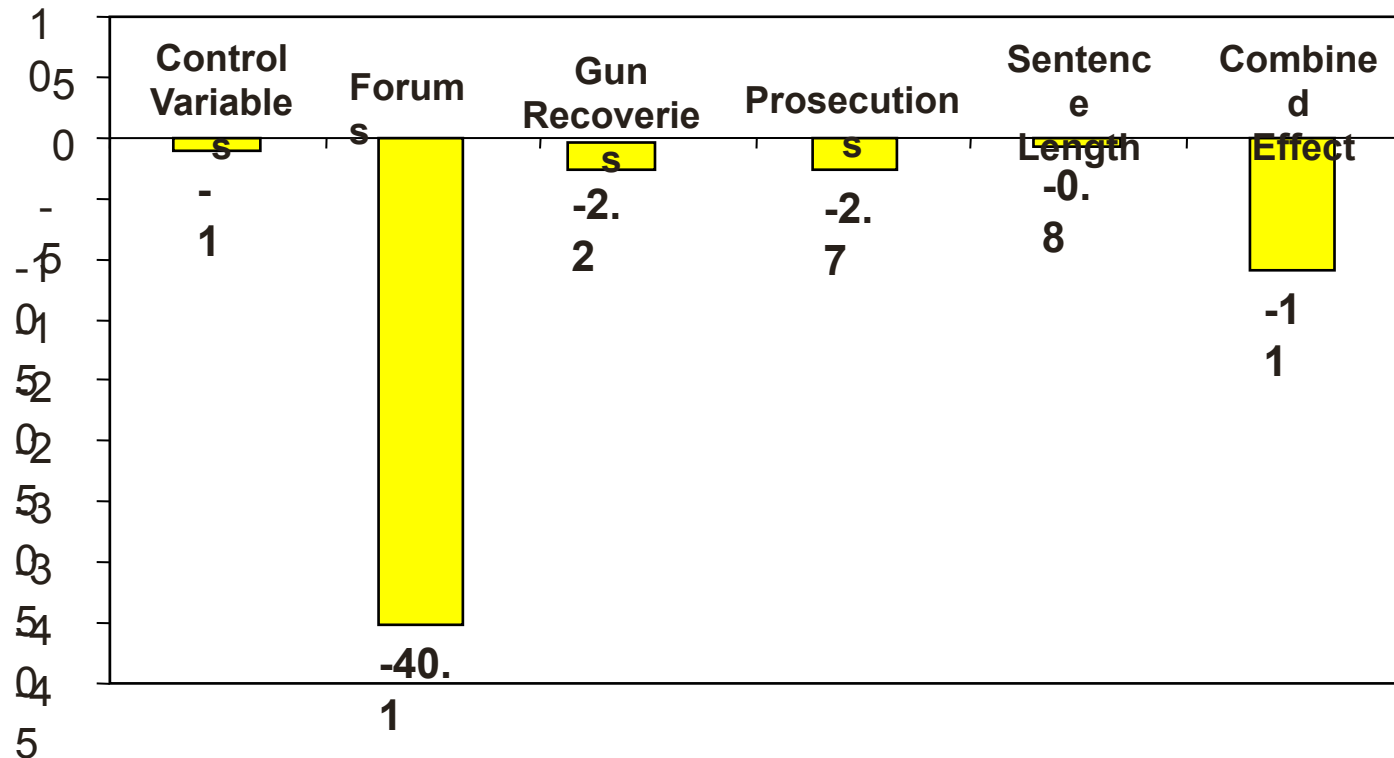


52.1%  
reduction in  
fatal and  
non-fatal  
shootings  
between  
2011 and  
2017.



# Direct Communication: A Procedural Justice Alternative to Enforcement

Percentage decrease in Log (Homicide Rate) associated with a one-unit increase in PSN “treatment”



In Chicago, the impact of direct communication (forums) on violence was by far the most powerful part of the strategy.