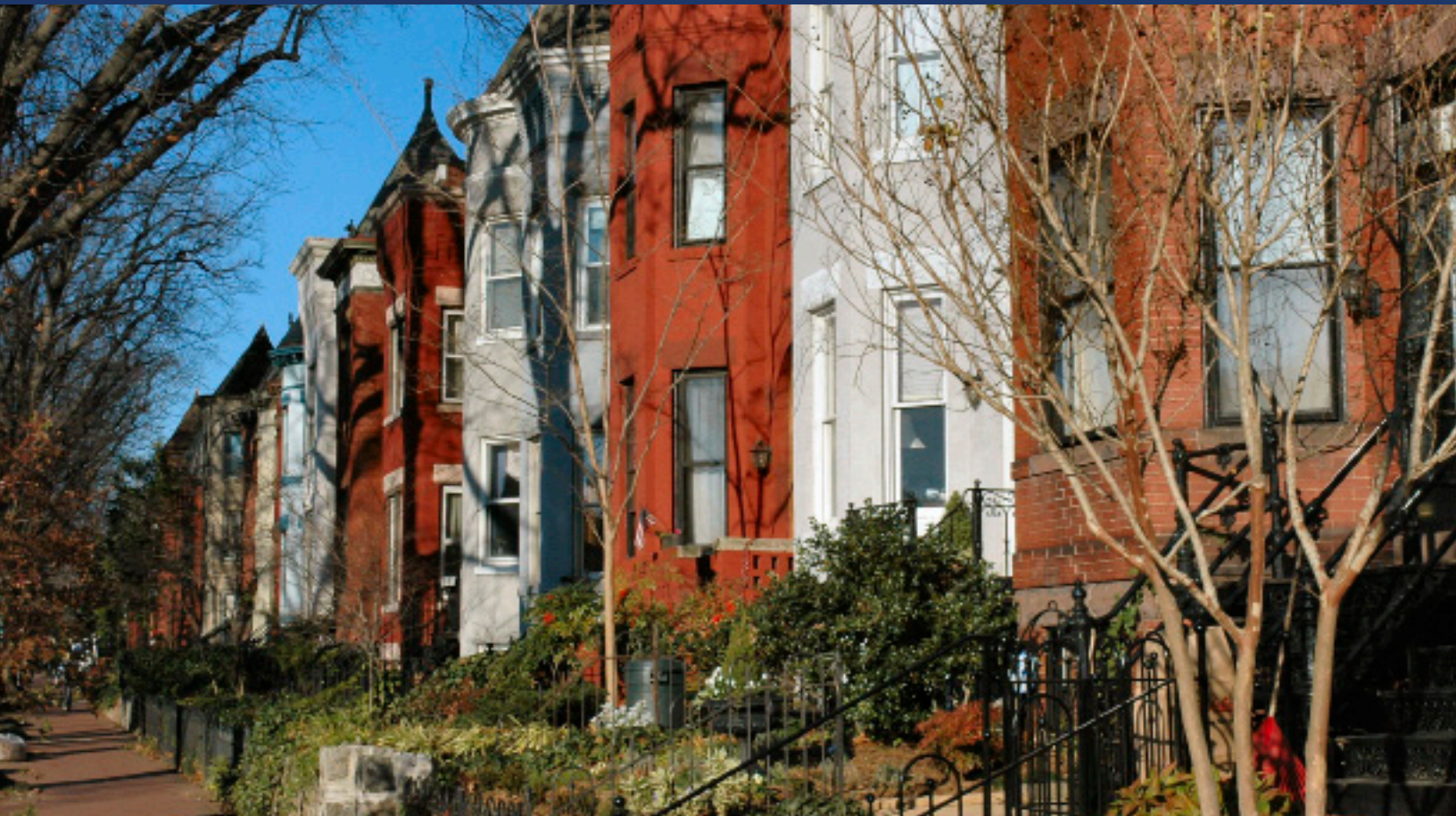


Strategic Plan for a Collaborative Neighborhood-Based Crime Prevention Initiative



Akiva Liberman
Jocelyn Fontaine
Martha Ross
Caterina Gouvis Roman
John Roman

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1 Introduction

Neighborhoods vary in their experiences of crime and victimization. The reasons include both immediate and long-term factors associated with crime. Neighborhoods vary in the ongoing levels of problem behavior, including crime, the presence of gangs or crews, and the availability and/or visibility of drugs. Neighborhoods also vary in the presence of risky circumstances that might lead to crime, such as the number of unsupervised and idle youth, in the number of unemployed residents, in the levels of physical and social disorder on the streets, and in opportunities for theft. Neighborhoods also vary in their levels of protective factors including opportunities for positive recreational opportunities for youth, in the resources available to combat crime and disorder, and in informal social control and supervision.

This combination of immediate and long-term factors suggests a promising approach to reduce and prevent crime at the neighborhood level which would combine efforts to address short-term and long-term factors. Efforts to suppress crime in the short term would be combined with efforts to address risk factors for crime in the longer term, through the provision of services, the remediation of neighborhood neglect, and efforts to improve youth developmental outcomes and increase human and social capital. Suppression efforts would be led by law enforcement and other justice agencies, while efforts to prevent crime through the reduction in its risk factors and increase in protective factors would be led by human service agencies.

This report is a strategic plan for a collaborative neighborhood-based crime prevention initiative (NCPI) that combines suppression by law enforcement with intervention and prevention through social services to address risk factors for crime, and is guided by analysis of data on crime and neighborhood risk factors,

The plan presented here would be a natural development of the city's Focused Improvement Area (FIA) Initiative, which was developed along these lines. The strategic plan is presented as an integrated plan for an NCPI, rather than presented in terms of recommended *changes* to the existing FIA initiative; indeed, many recommended elements are part of the existing initiative.

This strategic plan builds on the foundation the city has put in place in the FIA Initiative. DCPI's understanding of the FIA initiative, including some of its challenges and successes, is summarized briefly in Section 2, and described more fully in the accompanying *Review of Past Practices*.¹ We also draw upon the literature associated with collaborative initiatives elsewhere, which is reviewed in the accompanying *Review of the Literature Relevant to Collaborative Crime Reduction*.² Some key conclusions from that review are briefly summarized here in Section 3.

Building on the efforts to date, this strategic plan for an NCPI is intended to help bring greater clarity to goals, objectives, and measurable outputs and outcomes; to increase coordination between crime suppression, prevention, and social service activities, in the service of those goals; and to propose a strong administrative and governance structure.

2 Brief History of the FIA Initiative

The FIA Initiative, which was launched in November 2007, was designed to be a community-based initiative that aimed to reduce criminal activity and increase the quality of life in at-risk communities by combining community policing with human and social services delivery.

The initial goal of the FIA Initiative was to increase police presence in high-crime areas and to deliver human and social services to families and households in those high-crime areas more effectively and efficiently through a comprehensive, citywide partnership. To reduce violent crime and increase quality of life, the Initiative focused on three principal objectives in the FIA areas (or FIAs): increasing public safety, increasing human and social services to households, and reducing signs of physical and social disorder (e.g., broken windows, debris, graffiti).

In March 2010, the Executive Office of the Mayor/Office of the City Administrator asked the District of Columbia Crime Policy Institute (DCPI) to assess the FIA Initiative. DCPI conducted an assessment based on interviews with the Initiative's stakeholders; reviews of programmatic materials and administrative records, and field observations of the Initiative's processes and procedures.

The FIA Initiative was initially envisioned as a comprehensive, community-based collaborative involving multiple city agencies and community partners to reduce crime and increase the quality of life in select high-crime areas, as described in documents produced by city agencies. The vision and corresponding goals were broad and ambitious, requiring the involvement and coordination of many different government and community-based agencies. While many of the Initiative's activities were implemented as designed, they have evolved over time. Because no structured decision-making or strategic-planning process has been implemented since the Initiative's inception in 2007, the time is opportune to rethink some of its goals, strategies, and structures.

2.1. THE LINK BETWEEN PUBLIC SAFETY AND HUMAN SERVICES

The key conceptual link between the public safety goals of the Initiative and the other services provided in the FIAs was to address the root causes of crime. The general domains of the human and social services provided were also intended to address commonly understood risk factors for crime, including unemployment, unsupervised youth not engaged in structured activities, truancy and school drop-out, and neighborhood disorder. However, the particular services provided in the FIAs were not linked in a more specific way to particular crime problems occurring in those FIAs.

Over time, the FIA Initiative seems to have evolved into two distinct efforts that are implemented in the same places but are only loosely linked. There is a crime-focused effort, which involves increasing police presence, identifying known offenders, and discussing and responding to critical incidents, to better coordinate crime suppression efforts. Regular meetings are held involving criminal justice agencies. In this effort, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is the lead agency.

There is also a distinct service delivery effort, which attempts to improve service delivery to FIA residents. This is a proactive effort by the District to reach out to residents to identify service needs, and to coordinate needs assessments and service delivery across agencies. Ongoing efforts are made to reach city residents, through a variety of contacts and in varying venues, and to have residents identify service needs for their households on an assessment form. The form serves interagency coordination in two ways. It asks about service needs that span many agencies, and it also asks residents for signed consent for those agencies to share relevant data. This sets the stage for cross-agency discussion and coordination at regular case review meetings. In this effort, the Department of Human Services is the lead agency, and MPD acts as one service agency among many.

2.2. LESSONS LEARNED

The original Initiative experienced some notable success, including relationship-building across the participating government agencies and the adoption of a new social service paradigm, as discussed in the accompanying *Review of Past Practice*. Violent crime seems to be down in the FIA areas, as in many other areas of the District.³

Our assessment of the FIA Initiative leads us to identify four key areas for improvement.

First, DCPI recommends articulating goals and objectives along with associated measurable outcomes and outputs, respectively—in a way that would allow the initiative to be monitored, adjusted, and evaluated. Making explicit the key assumptions and expectations about how—and when—activities of the Initiative are expected to reduce or prevent crime is a key early step (see sections 4 and 9).

Second, as it has evolved, the relationship between the human and social service component of the FIA Initiative to the crime control component has become fairly loose. DCPI recommends aligning these components more tightly and refocusing the human and social services aspects on targeted crime prevention to address risk factors for crime in the medium term. In this approach, particular human and social services components are chosen for their potential to control and prevent crime in the short and medium term, based on neighborhood-based assessments. This derives naturally from our focus on measurable goals and objectives (see section 4), and on targeted crime prevention (see section 7).

Third, although the Initiative was intended to be area- or neighborhood-based, the intervention strategies were not tailored to the different target areas. DCPI recommends that a data-driven assessment of the key risk factors for crime and violence in each target area be used to develop area- or neighborhood-based activities and objectives. Neighborhood-based assessment is discussed in Section 9.

Fourth, an interagency and multimodal initiative such as the FIA Initiative requires dedicated and consistent staff with enough political standing and leverage to reach across agencies. DCPI recommends an administrative structure to support the Initiative in Section 8. This includes dedicated staff, working with a steering committee, to lead the specification of measurable goals and objectives and to direct ongoing data-driven monitoring of associated performance measures and outcomes. The appropriate structure will help the Initiative to improve collaboration, data sharing, and oversight, and will allow for ongoing improvements.

3 The Literature on Collaborative Crime Reduction

The accompanying *Review of the Literature Relevant to Collaborative Crime Reduction* summarizes research on initiatives that involve diverse approaches executed by multiagency partners to reduce crime and improve neighborhoods. It identifies two types of interventions: those focused on reducing or preventing crime at the neighborhood level, and those with broader goals of improving neighborhoods or resident well-being within neighborhoods (sometimes called “comprehensive community initiatives”). While both types of interventions are place-based, they usually involve different public agencies, funding sources, and community-based organizations with diverse missions.

The *Review of the Literature* also distinguishes the effort and collaboration necessary for short- and long-term initiatives, details what is known about structuring an effective interagency collaborative, and identifies best and promising practices for engaging the community—both community-based organizations and community residents in general—in crime suppression, reduction, and prevention efforts. From this review, we have identified and highlighted key lessons that inform important aspects of our strategic plan.

- Interagency collaboration is critical but can take years and serious commitment to achieve. It requires dedicated staff, relationship building across agencies, and openness to different ways of doing things.
- Sustaining initiatives requires securing sufficient resources, assessing data to substantiate success and make mid-course corrections, spreading ownership across partners, institutionalizing organizational structures to create resiliency in case of staff turnover, and building and maintaining community support. In the absence of some or all of these factors, even successful initiatives may not be sustained.
- Project goals must be rigorously assessed against the resources and support necessary to implement them. If a partnership lacks the capacity to accomplish some goals, the goals must be adjusted or investments must be made to increase capacity.
- Data and information, including knowledge from front-line practitioners, must be used to define the dynamics of problems carefully, and knowledge about the problem must be updated frequently to revise the definition of the problem.
- When working with gang members or active offenders, crime suppression activities should be balanced with interventions to reduce or prevent criminal activity, such as services related to education, substance abuse, and counseling. Balancing suppression and intervention is challenging, as criminal justice agencies are accustomed to working together on clearly defined suppression activities (e.g., arrest and prosecution), and are often able to collaborate more quickly on suppression activities than those working on intervention/prevention activities.
- Different subpopulations will respond to different intervention and prevention activities and levels of service intensity. Age, the degree of criminal involvement, and the presence of specific risk and protective factors are among the relevant factors.
- Coordinating multiple human services components may be necessary for crime prevention and intervention. For example, finding and holding a job may require mental health and substance abuse treatment, housing assistance, and education and training. When coordinated, these services can work together to stabilize someone at risk for crime. When uncoordinated, the unmet need for one service may undermine the utility of other services.

4 Strategic Planning: Key Components, Goals, and Objectives

DCPI's recommendations for a collaborative neighborhood-based crime prevention initiative (NCPI) focus on its organization and structure. The NCPI is conceptualized as a data-driven, neighborhood-based initiative which uses neighborhood-level assessments to choose the target neighborhoods and to tailor the activities in each neighborhood. Because neighborhood-based assessment would help determine the particular activities in each neighborhood, this report does not recommend specific crime suppression, intervention, or prevention and human services activities. Instead, its focus is on the structure of the initiative.

4.1. MISSION

DCPI takes the following to be the mission of the NCPI:

The initiative is a collaborative neighborhood-based, data-driven effort to reduce and prevent crime, with a focus on violent crime. The initiative combines crime suppression activities, led by law enforcement and other criminal and juvenile justice agencies, with human and social service prevention activities intended to address risk factors for crime, targeted to youth, families, and places at high risk of crime or victimization. The initiative's goals and objectives are driven by an analysis of neighborhood crime patterns and risk factors for crime. It is led by an interagency collaborative including criminal and juvenile justice agencies along with human and social service agencies.

4.2. KEY COMPONENTS

DCPI recommends that the initiative be organized around three key components, which are discussed in separate sections of this report:

- Interagency collaboration
- Crime suppression and intervention
- Targeted crime prevention to address risk factors for crime, largely through social services

4.3. MEASURABLE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A core principle is to design the NCPI with an eye to being monitored and eventually evaluated. A key consideration concerns how each of the initiative's activities can—or cannot—be expected to produce measurable impacts on public safety, and in what time-frame.

Establishing measurable goals and objectives for the NCPI as a whole and for its key components is vital. As used here, terms like mission, purpose, and principles are used to refer to ideas that guide the NCPI. However, the terms *goals* and *objectives* are reserved for more specific, measurable parts of the plan. *Goals* are ends and have associated measurable *outcomes*; *objectives* are program elements that serve as means toward those goals and have associated measurable outputs or performance measures.

For example, a crime reduction goal for the initiative might be to reduce after-school violence. Three objectives for this goal in a particular neighborhood might include increasing police presence near schools

during the two hours after dismissal; increasing the availability of after-school programs; and increasing participation in after-school activities. These objectives involve different agencies working in a coordinated manner. Neighborhood-specific performance measures would then be identified that are specific to each participating agency.

Taken together, the performance and outcome measures can be used to assess whether the initiative is achieving intended effects. Performance measures allow monitoring of whether the intended activities are happening. Outcome measures allow monitoring of whether those activities are having the intended effects. Performance measures and crime outcomes each need to be monitored regularly, to realize this potential (see section 9).

The NCPI involves crime suppression and intervention activities combined with targeted prevention activities to address risk factors for crime. Suppression, intervention, and prevention activities affect crime outcomes in different time frames. Suppression activities aim for relatively quick reductions in targeted crime. Intervention activities intervene with active offenders through social services, and also aim for relatively immediate impact. Prevention activities use human and social services to address risk factors for crime, and are often not expected to yield measurable crime prevention impacts immediately. The measurable effects of such prevention activities will instead be in the medium and long term.

4.4. CHOOSING TARGET NEIGHBORHOODS

It follows from these strategic considerations that the choice of target neighborhoods and their geographical boundaries must also match the proposed activities. That is, the choice and geography of target neighborhoods should be chosen based on three general considerations: the geography of the problem (crime patterns), its key drivers (risk factors) and their geography, and the potential of the NCPI approach (a combination of crime suppression and social services) to address those problems.

First, the choice of target neighborhoods is partly determined by neighborhood crime patterns and trends, and understanding the key drivers of local crime.

Second, the size and geography of particular target neighborhoods should be informed by the geography of its risk factors, which are potential targets for the NCPI's efforts. For example, if truancy is a key risk factor of concern and its reduction is a key objective, and if truancy patterns are school specific, then school boundaries may reasonably inform target area boundaries. If gang issues are a primary concern, then the geography of gang turf may inform the location and size of target neighborhoods. If reentry issues are a primary concern, then the geographical distribution of returning offenders may inform the choice of target neighborhoods.

Third, the target neighborhoods should be reserved for places where the integration of law enforcement and targeted prevention is necessary to intervene, suppress or reduce crime. Areas with crime problems that can be addressed successfully through suppression, without a targeted prevention component, are not ideal candidates for the NCPI. This implies the consideration of the levels of neighborhood risk factors for crime that can be addressed through targeted prevention activities, and the ability of the key actors serving those neighborhoods to effectively partner to address the risks in the neighborhood. It also involves a judgment of the potential of combined suppression and targeted prevention activities to affect future area crime.⁴

These general considerations will often lead to the selection of target areas that map onto recognizable neighborhood boundaries. However, these considerations may identify areas of varying size. For example, if school-based risk factors seem especially prominent, then a focus on high-school versus middle-school might lead to different target area boundaries. Nonetheless, for ease of exposition, this report refers to the target areas as "neighborhoods," even though target areas may actually be of varying sizes.

Finally, we should note that there is no single correct set of criteria for choosing target neighborhoods since the choice involves political considerations, values, and resources in the weighing of these different considerations.

5 Interagency Collaboration

Crime and violence are complex problems that require multiple government agencies and community actors working together to reduce crime. The NCPI takes a comprehensive approach to crime utilizing suppression, intervention, and prevention activities, and involves law enforcement, other criminal justice agencies, and city service agencies. Because criminal and juvenile justice in DC involves federal agencies, the partnership would be strengthened by the inclusion of federal agencies, such as the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency, the Superior Court, Court Social Services, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

5.1. BREADTH OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A key strategic decision for the initiative is how broadly to extend the collaborative decision-making process. DCPI recommends that the NCPI focus on interagency collaboration and decision-making, along with community engagement and input.

Community engagement and input is critical for the initiative's success and should be an important sustained activity of an NCPI. Community-based organizations (CBOs) and influential community members, particularly those working directly with criminal or at-risk populations, have important street-level information that is invaluable in assessing neighborhood problems and crafting effective strategies. CBOs and influential community members (e.g., clergy, respected residents) are also powerful resources for crime reduction. Community policing, therefore, is an obvious cornerstone for an NCPI with community outreach as a key activity.

Whether to broaden the initiative's decision-making beyond multiple government agencies to include community stakeholders, such as neighborhood leaders and CBOs, is an important strategic decision. Broadening the decision-making could have important advantages, but also would come at some significant cost. On balance, DCPI recommends a narrower approach in which decision-making is limited to interagency bodies, while engagement and input from the community is emphasized.

A more expansive community collaborative could have many potential benefits. By involving CBOs and local stakeholders, the initiative could integrate and leverage more community resources. By involving community stakeholders and leaders in directing neighborhood activity, a partnership can also increase the ability of neighborhoods to informally control local crime and disorder, by increasing local "social capital." Broadening the partnership in this way also has the potential to make the initiative's efforts more sustainable.

Despite these advantages, involving community partners in the decision-making of the initiative would also have significant costs and would make the initiative more difficult to manage. Because decision-making with more partners is generally more protracted, it would likely extend the time and resources necessary to get the initiative operating successfully. In addition, involving CBOs effectively may require an additional commitment of funds to support their activities.

Finally, *promises* or *expectations* of a broad community partnership—including community involvement in the initiative's decision-making and use of resources—can raise expectations that may not be met in practice. Because of the difficulties in mounting a robust city-community partnership, an initiative that begins with wide community involvement can then easily turn into a narrower interagency collaboration, in which community partners have little control. Unmet expectations for a stronger role can then easily erode community trust. Thus, if the broader community-partnership approach is taken, its implications must be carefully considered, so that expectations of community partners can be met.

In this light, DCPI recommends the simpler and more focused approach in which the initiative's decision-making is limited to an interagency collaboration, along with an emphasis on community engagement and input. This would prevent the initiative from unduly raising community expectations for control of the initiative or for funds to be made available to community partners through the initiative.

5.2. INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

A comprehensive intergovernmental approach to crime suppression, intervention, and prevention requires involvement of a variety of government agencies. Coordinating the activity of criminal justice agencies with human and social services agencies is a considerable task that requires sustained attention. Interagency collaboration tends to require agency stakeholders to step out of their usual bureaucratic practices and either deviate from, or change, standard operating procedures. In addition, a robust interagency collaboration requires information sharing and sustained efforts to coordinate activities, including identifying barriers to collaboration and developing innovative ways to overcome those barriers. Interagency collaborations are most successful when they include the following elements:

- administrative leaders within each partner agency who have sufficient status to spearhead the initiative and promote interagency collaboration;
- a transparent administrative structure, including a steering committee, with dedicated staff and resources;
- regular meetings among partners to clarify goals, to work through differences in perspectives, and to monitor ongoing efforts; and
- a full-time project director to lead the partnership, who should be housed in an agency with sufficient status to direct interagency collaboration.

5.3. INTEGRATION OF HUMAN SERVICES AGENCIES

A key strategic consideration for the initiative is the relationship between the human and social service activities with the public safety activities and goals.

If the NCPI is going to be evaluated and judged on short- and medium-term crime reduction, then DCPI recommends focusing the human services and prevention activities on those that can be expected to have crime-reducing effects within that time frame. We refer to this approach as “targeted crime prevention.”

It is important to articulate how—and when—proposed human and social-services components of the initiative would be expected to reduce crime and violence. While some human services and prevention activities might reduce crime in the near term (e.g., supervised after-school activities of at-risk adolescents), and others in the medium term (e.g., increasing school engagement and attainment of middle-school students), some others might have effects only in the long term (e.g. pre-natal interventions targeting at-risk mothers). Directly focusing the bulk of FIA efforts on evidence-based activities known to produce short-term and medium-term impacts on crime and violence will increase the likelihood that the NCPI will achieve its goals in a demonstrable fashion.

5.4. ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER COLLABORATIVES AND OTHER AGENCIES

The NCPI needs to be aligned with other interagency efforts involving many of the same agencies, but which aim primarily at education or other human services goals. Implementation should also be executed

in conscious alignment with other crime reduction partnerships, such as the Citywide Coordinating Council for Youth Violence Prevention (CCCYVP) or the former Gang Intervention Partnership.

DCPI does not recommend that the NCPI serve as the overarching partnership that subsumes or coordinates all of the efforts of community-based organizations and collaboratives. Rather, DCPI recommends narrowing and sharpening the focus of the NCPI to be more tightly focused on crime *per se* as its measurable outcome, and using human services and prevention activities to address risk factors for crime in the medium term (see sections 2 and 7).⁵

Other interagency and community partnership efforts are also ongoing. Without explicit coordination, such overlapping partnership efforts are likely to interfere with each other. Taking stock of the range, overlap, and different foci of such interagency efforts would be an important step toward using them strategically. It would also allow these various efforts to leverage their shared knowledge and build upon the relationships they have with each other, with nonprofit organizations delivering services, and with community residents.

Such coordination should happen at both the city level and the local level. Coordination with ongoing violence prevention and intervention efforts needs to be spearheaded by the city government at high levels, such as the Office of the City Administrator, together with the NCPI's Steering Committee (discussed below). In addition, partnership activity being conducted on the ground in the neighborhoods should be coordinated at the local level, perhaps by local intervention teams (see section 8).

5.5. INTEGRATED DATA AND DECISION-MAKING

A key feature of successful partnerships involving multiple agencies is the sharing and using of data to inform critical decisions and monitor progress. This requires a shared commitment to using data to track progress, accompanied by an understanding of the complexity in creating meaningful, measurable metrics, especially those that cross government agencies.

To facilitate a shared commitment, the NCPI must identify measurable goals and objectives early. These goals and objectives must be specific and clearly related to measurable activities, their outputs (e.g., performance measures), and crime outcomes (reductions in particular crimes) in a pre-determined time frame.⁶ For example, a violence reduction goal for a specific neighborhood might be to reduce after-school violence among youth. Objectives for this goal might include increasing police officer presence near schools during the two hours after school dismissal; increasing the availability of after-school programs; or increasing participation in after-school activities. Data on each of these objectives will provide the foundation for assessing the NCPI's performance.

We recognize the difficulty of sharing data across agencies, particularly sensitive information. Lack of clarity concerning the legal requirements for confidentiality in interagency collaboration, especially concerning juveniles, can pose a major hurdle to interagency collaboration. Absent clear legal guidance, concerns about the possible violation of confidentiality can naturally interfere with information sharing, even when it is legally permitted. Such concerns on the part of agency staff can bedevil a collaborative effort, especially with staff turnover. Therefore, DCPI recommends that a thorough assessment be made of these requirements, and then that clear and appropriate legal guidance be drafted concerning allowable interagency information sharing. Such an effort is especially timely after recent legislative changes to the confidentiality of juvenile records.⁷

DCPI recommends the following first steps:

- Identify available data across agency partners, how data are formatted and updated, and whether they are reliable.
- Assess the confidentiality requirements of participating agencies, and develop a guide for interagency partners.

- Develop strategies to meet those confidentiality requirements while maximizing shared information among relevant agencies. These strategies may include common data collection, signed consent to information sharing from residents involved in the NCPI's prevention activities, and common databases.⁸

5.6. SCHOOLS

Schools are key partners in the work of an NCPI. School-based activity is a common component in many community-based crime reduction efforts, particularly those emphasizing prevention and youth development. School officials, teachers, counselors, school resource officers and other staff often provide referrals to violence intervention programs, and can be an important sources of targeting information (e.g., pinpointing youth with certain negative behaviors, or at risk of failing). Schools may also be a location in which violence occurs, either during or immediately after the school day. If this is the case, the schools will be locations of focus for crime suppression efforts, in collaboration with principals, teachers, and counselors. In addition, positive involvement in school is an important protective factor for at-risk youth, and some of the NCPI's activities may be intended to increase school attendance, engagement, and achievement.

6 Crime Suppression and Intervention

A major theme in this strategic plan is the need to align the activities of the NCPI to measurable crime outcomes. Because the connection between crime suppression and intervention activities to measurable crime outcomes is quite direct, and much more direct than with prevention activities, our discussion of crime suppression and intervention here is quite brief. More information about particular components of crime suppression and intervention is found in the accompanying *Review of the Literature*. Here we discuss only a few strategic considerations.

For an NCPI, an obvious cornerstone for law enforcement is community policing.⁹ The data-driven interagency planning and monitoring of an NCPI also builds on problem-oriented policing. The particular strategies for intervening and suppressing local crime and violence will depend on an analysis of the local crime problem, and local conditions that contribute to it. Effective suppression requires accurate analysis of the crime to be suppressed (see neighborhood-based assessment in section 9).

6.1. TIMING AND DURATION OF CRIME SUPPRESSION EFFORTS

In a neighborhood that is experiencing an acute problem, crime suppression may be a clear early need. Over the past decade, several interventions in other jurisdictions have been used with some success to suppress crime and violence, particularly in the context of gang issues and drug markets (see accompanying *Review of the Literature*). A variety of community and place-based crime interventions have also demonstrated success.

One idea sometimes considered is for law enforcement to intervene with acute crime problems, bring them under control in weeks or months, and then move on to another area.¹⁰ This idea may only be realistic under very specific circumstances. For example, it may work for disrupting a relatively new and acute problem to prevent it from becoming more chronic. But when neighborhood crime problems are more long-standing, then a dedicated law-enforcement effort may be required for years rather than weeks or months. Even after intensive crime suppression activity ends, the overall strategy may include law-enforcement efforts to maintain crime reduction, rather than a return to previous routine practice.

A similar issue has arisen concerning the Weed and Seed Initiative, where there has been considerable debate about the timing of weeding (crime suppression) and seeding (prevention). One early model was for weeding to happen first, to “prepare the ground” for seeding, with the possibility that initial weeding could be short-term. However, evaluations have found that if anything, it is more effective for the seeding to begin earlier (see the accompanying *Review of the Literature*).

6.2. COMMUNITY POLICING

Suppression activities can be negatively received by communities if it is not clear to them why they are occurring and how they fit into an overall strategy to improve community quality of life. Engaging with the community is an indispensable asset for the long-term success of any NCPI, and community policing approaches are an important method of securing that support.

6.3. HIGH-RISK OFFENDERS

In many areas, a small number of offenders play a disproportionate role in crime and violence. Once identified, these offenders can be engaged with a “carrot and stick” approach. Several interventions have

found that confronting high-risk offenders with the community's disapproval of their activities can be a powerful incentive to change. The incentives (carrots) may include assistance with employment and other services that they may need—essentially providing them a pathway to desistance. The prospective sanctions (sticks) may include enhanced prosecution, supervision revocation, and other meaningful consequences for returning to criminal behavior. In the event that the criminal behavior continues, the NCPI's partnership must actually deliver those sanctions, or the deterrent effect is undermined.

6.4. STREET OUTREACH

Outreach workers are key to the success of many community-based crime intervention efforts, especially when focused on gang involvement. They identify and engage clients (such as active offenders and at-risk youth), provide informal counseling and steer them to formal services as needed. They are a key source of information on criminal activity and community needs, offering complementary skills and knowledge to law enforcement.

Outreach workers with a criminal background are often very effective in connecting with clients, but are a potential source of tension with law enforcement, especially if the outreach workers are perceived as still connected to criminal activity. Most program evaluators have concluded, however, that the benefits of such outreach workers outweigh the risks (see accompanying *Review of the Literature*).

7 Targeted Crime Prevention

Crime prevention activities can range very broadly, including school-based, family-based, and place-based interventions.¹¹ In this report, we use the term “prevention” mostly for human and social services activities aimed to address risk factors for crime.

DCPI recommends that the NCPI employ a prevention strategy that connects specific crime prevention activities to neighborhood-specific crime reduction goals in a targeted way. A broader prevention mission would seek to address many social problems simultaneously, including crime and other social problems such as educational attainment, joblessness, or homelessness.

Prevention efforts also differ in whether they take a universal approach aimed at all people (a.k.a., primary prevention) or a targeted approach aimed at those who are at high risk of committing new crime or being victimized (a.k.a., secondary prevention).¹² DCPI recommends a secondary or targeted prevention approach, aimed at the most at-risk crimes, youth, families, and residents.

With a targeted-crime-prevention approach, prevention activities—mostly social services—are employed to reduce risk factors for crime, and are targeted at the most at-risk crimes, youth, families, residents, and locations. Prevention activities are strategically connected to specific neighborhood crime-reduction goals, and these activities are chosen for their potential to reduce crime in the medium term.

- The NCPI’s outcomes should be focused on reduction on measures of crime, and particularly on serious crimes, youth violence, and serious gang or crew incidents (see section 4).
- Target areas, and their size and boundaries, should be identified based on the geography of the crime problem, its risk factors, and the key activities that will be used to address them (see sections 4 and 9)
- Within targeted neighborhoods, the NCPI should focus on high-risk youth, families, residents, and locations, as identified by data-driven strategies (discussed in section 9).

7.1. TARGETING CRIME

A key choice for the NCPI is whether to target crime and violence as the primary goal, or whether to also target other social problems as primary goals themselves. When crime is set as the primary goal of the initiative, human services activities are also mounted to address other goals (e.g., education, joblessness), but within the initiative, those are pursued as means to the ends of measurable crime prevention and control. DCPI recommends keeping the reduction of crime per se as the NCPI’s central mission.¹³

In contrast to a broader mission of addressing social problems, with crime reduction as one among many goals, an initiative with a clear crime-prevention mission is better able to prioritize among many possible human services components and maintain focus, better able to measure activities and outcomes, and is more clearly differentiated from other interagency initiatives (e.g., those directed by education or health).

DCPI recommends that a small number of overarching citywide crime reduction goals be established across all target neighborhoods, such as reductions in homicide, serious person crime, youth violence, and gang or crew incidents. However, DCPI recommends that the strategies to achieve these goals be allowed to vary across the neighborhoods, based on analysis of crime patterns, risk factors, and community assets and deficits (see section 9).

7.2. TARGETING RISK

Prevention efforts also range in whether they take a universal approach aimed at all residents (i.e., primary prevention) or a targeted approach aimed at those at high risk of serious offending or victimization (i.e., secondary or targeted prevention). DCPI recommends a targeted prevention approach that is aimed at the most at-risk youth, families, and residents. This is more limited than a primary (universal) prevention agenda for all families and youth in a neighborhood.¹⁴

In an initiative with crime as its primary measurable outcome, it is important to carefully think through whether designated prevention activities can be targeted sufficiently to lead to an expected crime prevention yield, and in what time-frame.

Consider a neighborhood in which addressing lack of employment for individuals returning from incarceration is a key objective. The employment services that are expected to impact crime would be targeted to formerly incarcerated persons, rather than to all residents. However, providing employment services *only* to formerly incarcerated persons is generally not equitable or politically feasible, especially when unemployment rates are high. Instead, employment services would be likely offered to all residents. In this case, then, before choosing employment services for formerly incarcerated persons as a prevention objective in the neighborhood, it would be important to recognize that most of the employment services effort would likely not reach the intended target, and then to carefully consider the implications that follow.

DCPI's recommendation here is that strategic consideration of the expected effects on crime reduction from a prevention activity should precede mounting that activity. Can the activity be delivered in a targeted manner to the people and places at high risk of crime? If it cannot be delivered in such a targeted manner, what proportion of the prevention service is expected to reach those high-risk targets? Many worthy human-services and prevention activities, that deserve to be expanded in their own right, may have little expected crime-reduction returns when delivered widely in an untargeted way.

7.3. TARGETING PLACES

The notion of targeted prevention also extends to place-based interventions. That is, the NCPI might address place-based risk factors associated with crime, such as lighting, public access, transportation, and physical and social disorder, but again, DCPI recommends targeted rather than universal prevention. Crime patterns can be extremely local, and different neighborhoods—or even blocks within neighborhoods—might have different key risk factors. For example, inadequate lighting might be an issue in two neighborhoods, but may be associated with crime in only one of those two neighborhoods. If so, within the NCPI, lighting would only be prioritized in that neighborhood.

7.4. WRAP-AROUND CASE MANAGEMENT

Most crime reduction/prevention initiatives incorporate case management to assess a client, determine appropriate services, and document the processes and outcomes. Although conventional case management offered by a single case manager can be successful when well implemented, wrap-around case management, which involves multiple community-based agencies coordinating assessment and case planning, can provide services to clients that might not otherwise be available. In addition to offering more services and resources to clients, a team-based approach to case management also tends to have the positive effect of increasing collaborations and strengthening partnerships.

Coordinating multiple human services components may be necessary for effective crime prevention and intervention. For example, finding and holding a job may require mental health and substance abuse

treatment, housing assistance, and education and training. When coordinated, these services can work together to stabilize someone at risk for crime. When uncoordinated, the unmet need for one service may undermine the utility of other services.

One step in this direction is for an interagency team to conduct an initial joint assessment of client needs, and then to communicate regularly about clients with needs in multiple domains.¹⁵ Taking this coordinated approach to the next step would involve moving towards *joint* contact with the client, followed up by wrap-around case management across service domains. A single case manager would be empowered to help address the needs usually handled by several agencies.

7.5. TIMEFRAME FOR ACHIEVING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Suppression activities are designed to achieve relatively quick reductions in targeted crime. By contrast, targeted prevention activities—mostly social services—will produce crime reduction in the medium-term, and also in the long-term. Therefore, DCPI recommends that the prevention (human services) activities be targeted toward measurable intermediate goals (employment, school attendance) in the short term, and towards crime-reduction outcomes in the medium term, leading to a narrower—but more focused—social services component of the NCPI. However, prevention activities that would be expected to have a crime-reduction yield only in the considerably longer term may not be good candidate activities for the NCPI.

Of course, longer-term investment in human services and social capital is important in its own right, and can be expected to ultimately yield a crime prevention dividend. However, the crime-prevention dividend will usually not be realized within the realistic time-frame of an NCPI. Instead, such long-term investments must generally be mounted and assessed primarily on the grounds of other, more direct, primary outcomes, whether educational outcomes, employment, or health and well-being. The crime-reduction effect is an indirect and longer-term benefit of these more direct and shorter-term outcomes. DCPI does not recommend undertaking these longer-term investments under the umbrella of the NCPI.

8 Administrative Structure

The NCPI involves collaboration among public agencies, accompanied by clear and regular communication with community-based organizations and neighborhood stakeholders. Achieving the potential of such a collaborative initiative requires resources and an effective administrative structure (see accompanying *Review of the Literature*).

8.1. FULL-TIME PROJECT DIRECTOR

An interagency NCPI requires the attention of a full-time project director, located strategically in a position that allows him/her to reach across agencies and manage the program's progress. The project director should report directly to someone at the level of the City Administrator or Deputy Mayor for Public Safety. The project director should play a key role in sustaining the program when turnover occurs among lead staff or key partners.

The project director would have the following responsibilities:

- serve as a contact person and liaison between agencies
- monitor performance measures on an ongoing basis and make recommendations for changes to those measures to the steering committee, as required for effective oversight
- schedule steering committee meetings and prepare minutes
- lead the preparation of other reports
- manage routine administrative tasks
- maintain records and relevant documents

8.2. STEERING COMMITTEE

An NCPI requires a steering committee comprised of agency partners to oversee the initiative. For the steering committee to serve as a viable leadership entity, agency heads from the partner agencies or their delegates with decision-making authority should attend the meetings. The steering committee should meet often to maintain effective oversight.

DCPI recommends that the steering committee, through the project director and project staff, hold training sessions with all relevant agency leaders and key staff to discuss the NCPI's mission and goals, the intervention strategies and programs from each agency to be involved, and to articulate each individual's roles and responsibilities.

8.3. LOCAL INTERVENTION TEAMS

With an initiative in which different activities are implemented in different neighborhoods, it will be important to coordinate and monitor the specific objectives, performance measures, and crime outcomes of each neighborhood separately. Ideally a local intervention team would be established for each neighborhood to implement and monitor local activities, led by an agency already active in the neighborhood. The local intervention team would then report regularly on implementation progress and challenges to the project director and the steering committee.

8.4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Initial planning and implementation of this complex effort would benefit greatly from a technical assistance (TA) provider, such as DCPI. The TA provider would assist the steering committee by providing data analysis, as well as information on best and promising practices. The TA provider would assist in the development and implementation of a performance measurement system that will facilitate a future NCPI evaluation. The TA provider should use existing data as much as possible, to avoid duplicating work already done by city agencies.

9 Neighborhood Assessment, Data, and Monitoring

A first step is to establish the NCPI's specific crime-reduction goals. These goals may be the reduction of homicide, youth violence, gang or crew incidents and/or other Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) Part 1 crimes. In turn, these goals would shape the selection of target neighborhoods. DCPI recommends that the steering committee develop citywide crime-reduction goals, followed by neighborhood assessments and the development of neighborhood-specific objectives. Specific objectives for a target neighborhood would then be based on a neighborhood assessment of what is driving neighborhood crime, as well as potential targets for suppression, intervention and prevention activities.

9.1. NEIGHBORHOOD ASSESSMENT

Three general considerations should drive the choice of target neighborhoods: crime patterns, the levels and geography of risk factors, and the potential of the combination of suppression and prevention activities to address them (see section 4.4). This is a multi-step process that begins with identification of potential target neighborhoods based on crime patterns. This is then followed by analysis of the drivers of crime and key risk factors in those potential target neighborhoods, which would inform the choice of neighborhood objectives and activities. The neighborhood assessment should include analysis of what is driving crime, as well as the risk factors present that could identify the at-risk population to target for suppression, intervention and prevention activities. This assessment requires bringing together data in a variety of domains, such as:

- neighborhood geographical crime patterns;
- attributes of physical spaces;
- the age and distribution of individuals committing criminal activity;
- gang or crew membership and the dynamics between these groups;
- systematic reviews of key incidents (homicides, shootings);
- the level and distribution of related social problems, such as truancy, drug use, and mental health;
- key family risk factors;
- human service needs and gaps; and
- the level of public and private resources available, and gaps.

This analysis would then play a key role in the identification of target-neighborhood boundaries.

The neighborhood assessment would also be used to choose program elements, which would be neighborhood-specific. Neighborhood assessment might identify violence involving ex-offenders as a key crime issue in one neighborhood, but youth violence as a key issue in another neighborhood. The first neighborhood might then identify a large number of returning ex-offenders as a neighborhood-specific risk factor; to address this risk factor, neighborhood objectives might include targeted prevention activities to connect ex-offenders to needed substance-abuse and mental-health services, and to reduce their unemployment. In the second neighborhood, truancy might be identified as a key risk factor, which might require additional assessment to understand the drivers of truancy.

9.2. INFORMATION SHARING

Sharing information among the partnership agencies is a critical aspect of an NCPI initiative. A broad array of data should be used to identify appropriate targets for collaborative intervention, and to choose objectives and appropriate performance measures.

Development of a shared database that can be used to address the preceding considerations in target neighborhoods, and that can be used to choose targeted suppression and prevention activities, is a key early inter-agency collaboration objective for the NCPI. Reliable shared information is key to monitoring progress, to dynamically modifying plans and strategies, and eventually to assessing the effectiveness of the initiative.

Shared data should describe how well agencies are meeting both suppression and targeted prevention objectives in specific neighborhoods. Such data should be shared across the target neighborhoods so that successes can be repeated and failures avoided.

9.3. ONGOING MONITORING OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND OUTCOMES

Regular reporting and monitoring is important for keeping a complex interagency initiative on track, and adjusting it as needed. As a prerequisite, this requires clearly specifying the NCPI's expected public safety goals and associated measurable outcomes, and then clearly specifying each target neighborhood's specific objectives, along with associated performance measures. In addition, it is important to realistically consider the timeframe in which particular activities are expected to yield public safety results (see sections 4 and 7).

Performance measures need to include both measures of *efforts* to accomplish something, (e.g., for attempts to reach residents, the number of door knocks and phone calls), as well as measures of the *achievement* of those objectives (e.g., actually reaching intended residents). Both sets of measures are needed to inform necessary changes in operations over time.

Performance measures and outcomes then need to be collected, reported, and monitored routinely by the project director and the steering committee. Monitoring the performance measures allows assessment of the initiative's performance in accomplishing its objectives; monitoring the crime outcomes allows examination of the anticipated effect of those objectives on the initiative's public safety outcomes.¹⁶

10 Conclusion

This strategic planning document is designed to facilitate the development of an NCPI for D.C., as a natural development of the FIA Initiative. This plan is envisioned as one step in a longer collaborative strategic planning process.

An NCPI is a complex effort that involves collaboration across multiple sectors and agencies, input and engagement from the community, and the simultaneous use of multiple strategies to reduce crime and violence. This strategic plan attempts to integrate these various components in a coherent plan in which the various components complement each other, and to present a structure to support that complex undertaking. We also describe how data would be used to direct the initiative, from choosing target neighborhoods to identifying measurable suppression and targeted prevention objectives and activities. Regularly reported performance and outcome data would then be used to monitor the initiative's progress. These data would ultimately allow a rigorous evaluation of the initiative, which in turn would inform future NCPIs.

Notes

¹Fontaine, J. and J. Markman. 2010. *The District of Columbia Mayor's Focused Improvement Area Initiative: A Review of Past Practice*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

²Jannetta, J., M. Denver, C. G. Roman, N. P. Svajlenka, M. Ross, and B. Orr. 2010. *The District of Columbia Mayor's Focused Improvement Area Initiative: Review of the Literature Relevant to Collaborative Crime Reduction*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

³Absent a full evaluation, we are unable to determine how crime reduction in the FIAs compares to that in other areas, or to what degree that crime reduction is specifically related to the FIA Initiative.

⁴New analytical techniques (e.g., forecasting models or micro-simulation techniques) may be helpful in identifying promising circumstances for intervention, or when trends in key predictors (e.g., school fights, gun arrests) warn that the area is at risk for increases in violence. DCPI is working on such analyses.

⁵The ongoing FIA effort to coordinate human services in a broader way might stand as its own collaborative effort with little reference to crime.

⁶In the FIA Initiative, our understanding is that while crime objectives were articulated, they were only loosely related to particular human services and prevention activities, especially as it concerns the time-frame for effects. For example, crime reduction goals were quite short-term, but many human services activities can only affect crime in the long-term.

⁷Bill B18-344, "Expanding Access to Juvenile Records Amendment Act of 2010."

⁸In the FIA Initiative, a creative use of the human services assessment forms was able to overcome some of these concerns by asking respondents to provide signed consent to sharing relevant information. A new shared database was also created of tasks undertaken by the various agencies on cases.

⁹The community engagement aspect of the FIA Initiative builds upon a community policing approach, and seems to be functioning largely as intended. See also: Fontaine, J., Markman, J., and Nadeau, C. (2010). *Promising Practices of the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department*. DC Crime Policy Institute. www.dccrimepolicy.org.

¹⁰This seems to have been considered in early thinking in the FIA Initiative. In practice, FIAs were not rotated, and MPD has continued to remain involved in the FIAs.

¹¹Sherman, L. W., Gottfredson, D., MacKenzie, D., Eck, J., Reuter, P., and Bushway, S. (1997). *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising?* Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, U.S. Dept. of Justice.

¹²Efforts aimed at those already engaged in crime and violence, to prevent reoffending, would be termed "tertiary" prevention. We use the term "intervention" for such activities.

¹³This strategic plan approaches the entire NCPI effort from a public safety perspective, in keeping with the original overarching public safety goal of the FIA Initiative. Therefore, it does not directly address the FIA Initiative's efforts to better coordinate and deliver human and social services beyond their relationship to public safety goals. However, DCPI recommends that the human and social services effort undergo its own assessment and strategic planning. The effort to improve service delivery and coordination across agencies is an important policy goal for the District in its own right, beyond public safety considerations.

¹⁴This recommendation seems to be a departure from past practices. In the FIA Initiative, once a FIA was designated, the approach was to improve service delivery across many domains to all area residents. While improving coordinated services for District residents is an important goal in its own right, it may have only a diffused expected impact on crime reduction.

¹⁵In the human services effort of the FIA Initiative, considerable progress has been made in an initial joint assessment of client needs, and in regular communication about clients with needs in multiple domains, in meetings led by the Department of Human Services. However, once assessed, those needs have generally been addressed and followed up separately by multiple agencies, working in parallel and then sharing their findings. For example, a client with assessment needs from multiple agencies is contacted separately by each agency. Especially when clients are hard to reach, this is less than optimal.

¹⁶The FIA Initiative envisioned such a process of regular collection and review of performance measures. However, without dedicated staff, our understanding is that those performance measures were not able to be monitored regularly and predictably.

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Justice Policy Center
2100 M St NW
Washington, DC 20037
<http://www.urban.org>