



Executive Summary: Oakland Ceasefire Audit Report & Findings

December 2023

Prepared for Oakland Mayor Sheng Thao



Attachment A

Executive Summary

Audit Findings: The City of Oakland gradually walked away from the Ceasefire strategy, notably in 2020. In 2020 there was a clear shift away from ensuring that the components of the Ceasefire strategy were focused on groups and individuals at the highest risk of gun violence; and that the strategy was implemented with sufficient quality to impact citywide violence. As supported by agency staff and managers, this shift away from high-risk people to places were diametrically opposed to the focus that Ceasefire requires and directly contributed to the strategy becoming ineffective. During the audit process, we found that beginning in 2016-2017 and accelerating in 2019 and 2020, each essential element of the strategy was significantly watered down, resources stripped away, or refocused. As a result, the Ceasefire strategy no longer impacted citywide levels of violence in Oakland and as such the City of Oakland has not been effectively implementing the Ceasefire strategy since 2020.

CPSC came to this conclusion during the audit process through observations, and a review of quantitative and qualitative data that included interviews with key stakeholders currently doing this work in Oakland. Specifically, this audit included collecting a) quantitative crime and key performance data from 2021, 2022, and 2023, b) qualitative interviews with key stakeholders from OPD and DVP, c) document review, meeting observations, and d) debriefing with stakeholders after the sessions to gather additional information.

The analysis was conducted by examining each component of the Ceasefire strategy including: 1) Gun problem analysis; 2) Shooting review; 3) Coordination meeting; 4) Direct communication; 5) Life coaching and services and supports; 6) Focused supervision and enforcement. In these components the analysis sought to understand the conditions of management and governance and elaborate proposals to improve it (see figure 3 below).

Figure 3: Ceasefire Oakland Strategy



Source: NICJR

A brief description of the Oakland Ceasefire Strategy components, the diagnostic and recommendations are summarized below.

1. Gun Problem Analysis: Identifies what is driving gun violence in Oakland and who is at the highest risk of being a victim or perpetrator of gun violence. This is a foundational document specific to Oakland that informs *who* and *what* intervention and enforcement partners should focus on.

a. Diagnostic: Oakland's violence problem remains largely consistent with prior analysis in 2011-2012; 2016-2017 and 2020-2021, which found a hyper concentration of risk among justice involved, black and Latino adult men, with social connections to identifiable street groups and gangs in Oakland. The increase in violence in Oakland cannot be explained by some dramatic shift in the nature of the problem.

b. Recommendations:

- i. Increase Subject Matter Experts (SME) on Latino Gangs/groups to include newly immigrated groups (Guatemalan, Salvadorian, and Honduran) in both the DVP and the OPD. In OPD these SME should be a new unit within Ceasefire.
- ii. Reconfigure the risk assessments for DVP gun violence prevention/intervention to align with the Problem Analysis. The Problem Analysis should set the risk assessments for clients in Life Coaching and those receiving services and support under the gun violence prevention/intervention framework.

2. Shooting Review: The Shooting Review is a weekly OPD and law enforcement meeting examining every shooting that took place in the last seven days to help determine 1) which incidents will result in retaliation, 2) what is driving violence that week, 3) identify gun violence trends and violence dynamics, 4) identify which incidents, based upon evidence, individuals will be arrested for engagement in violence, 5) manages and focuses enforcement plans, and 6) identifies who will be intervened with using direct communication.

a. Diagnostic:

- i. The effectiveness and significance of the Shooting Review meeting, crucial to the success of this strategy, have significantly diminished because this meeting is no longer used to manage and direct gun violence reduction efforts.

b. Recommendations:

- i. To Make the Shooting Review functional, the OPD executive team should make this meeting and this strategy ***a priority*** for the Department again. Specifically, the executive team of the OPD needs to attend and participate in every meeting.

- ii. The shooting review should remain the Department's primary meeting to analyze and address gun violence in Oakland; should link analysis; investigations and enforcement; direct communication; and should guide the Department's work with partners including justice system agencies and community intervention organizations.
- iii. The National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) meeting should continue and be prioritized. Although this meeting is new, it has tremendous promise and should be fostered and cultivated to continue to inform the Shooting Review.

3. Coordination Meeting: The purpose of the Coordination Meeting is for 1) information to be shared with DVP and service providers on shooting incidents from the previous week, 2) to share what is believed to be driving gun violence dynamics, 3) to share who will be intervened with and why, and 4) to develop a proactive plan to address retaliatory shootings

a. Diagnostic:

- i. Coordination meetings are divided into two sessions. The first meeting involves key stakeholders and lacks documentation, while the second meeting, though structured, faces challenges in planning for retaliation.

b. Recommendations:

- i. Consolidate the coordination meetings into a singular session. Two coordination meetings are inefficient and consumes unnecessary staff and CBO resources. Streamlining this process into a single meeting would optimize time and resources.
- ii. The meetings should be led and overseen by the Mayor's Office or a designated senior public safety representative from the City Administration. These facilitators must take responsibility for guiding staff in formulating plans and subsequently hold them accountable for outcomes,
- iii. The meeting needs to examine incidents comprehensively, emphasizing not only their literal review but also a critical discussion on *how* the team plans to utilize the array of city and city-funded resources to proactively prevent retaliation. This robust discussion should inform near term violence reduction plans aimed at reducing retaliation and addressing violence drivers.

4. Direct Communication: Direct Communications include call-ins and custom notifications. Call-ins are larger group meetings with individuals at the highest risk of gun violence, law enforcement, service providers, and survivors of gun violence. Custom notifications are smaller meetings with a community member, a law enforcement official, a service provider, and individuals at the very highest risk of gun violence. The message

communicated to participants in these meetings is that we care about you, want to help you, and have tailored services to assist you, and gun violence must stop.

a. Diagnostic:

- i. Quantity: The audit reveals challenges in tracking direct communications data from 2020-2023, hindering analysis. The average number of individuals directly communicated with has decreased compared to pre-pandemic years, raising concerns about the effectiveness of the current approach in reaching those at the highest risk of gun violence.
- ii. Quality: The messaging in both call-ins and custom notifications appears to be effective. However, we recommend that speakers in attendance at the meeting be reflective of the entire partnership to include the District Attorney's Office and trauma surgeons/social workers to be in alignment with best practices.
- iii. Finally, the quality of call-in messaging from OPD would benefit from the use of the PowerPoint that had historically been used to ensure more succinct messaging.
- iv. Lastly, the audit observed challenges in consistently tracking the promptness of custom notification referrals from the OPD Shooting Review to actual message delivery.

Recommendations:

- v. We recommend increasing custom notifications with highest risk people that are directly impacted by gun violence. This strategy works best when communications are done with *impacted* individuals who are out of custody. Direct communications should be similar to pre-pandemic levels at approximately 300-350.
- vi. During the audit process, data availability and discrepancies coming from OPD to DVP were a common theme. Data should be provided to DVP Life Coaches from OPD consistently regarding individuals communicated with including *why* they were communicated with and contact information.

5. Life Coaching & Services and Support are offered to individuals in call-ins and custom notifications. Participation in Life Coaching and services and support is not required. However, if people are interested in life coaching, then the goal of the engagement is to reduce an individual's *risk* of becoming a victim or perpetrator of gun violence.

a. Diagnostic: DVP is poorly structured to address the service and support needs of high-risk individuals that express interest in services. Organizationally, key staff that would be responsible for locating these individuals and providing services to them are under different chains of command and do not formally communicate.

- i. Information provided by the DVP regarding percentage on retention during the observation period was unclear leading to inconsistencies between data and percentages
- ii. Even though the vast majority of direct communication recipients indicate interest in receiving help and support (84%); very few (only 25%) end up on a caseload after being referred to Life Coaching.
- iii. Out of the 25% of clients integrated into the caseload, a significant portion of Ceasefire clients do not remain on the caseload for an extended duration. Analysis of the data from the reporting period reveals a rapid decline, with Ceasefire clients often disengaging from the caseload within a span of 2-3 months.

b. Recommendations:

- i. Re-organize the DVP Gun Violence work under one management structure. The DVP lacks strategic focus and intentionality and needs to be reorganized with an understanding of the difference between prevention and intervention as it relates to gun violence.
- ii. The DVP needs a clear theory of change around gun violence. Currently, there are bits and pieces of elements of different strategies. The theory of change needs to be developed and designed based on the data and who is at the very highest risk of gun violence.
- iii. To increase the percentage of clients who come onto life coaching case load, we recommend combining the Outreach Worker and Violence Interrupter positions so that they can engage in relentless outreach. Relentless outreach is a function that the city currently does not fund and is needed to locate and engage Ceasefire clients and other individuals at elevated risk levels that are often difficult to consistently locate.
- iv. We recommend that 70% of DVP Life Coaches' caseloads be made up of Ceasefire referrals that originate from the Shooting Review, Custom Notifications, Call-Ins, and Coordination Meetings. The other 30% must meet at least four of the five following criteria to ensure they are the very highest risk population as per multiple problem analysis findings:
 1. Aged 18-35 Black or Latino male
 2. Significant Criminal Justice history
 3. Connected to a crew/group/gang
 4. Prior shooting victim
 5. Connected to a recent shooting (in the past six months, a friend, a family member, or a fellow group member was either shot or arrested for a shooting)

6. Focused Supervision & Enforcement for individuals who continue to engage in gun violence. Enforcement should be specific to the small number of individuals who continue to engage in gun violence.

a. Diagnostic:

- i. While the goal of the Ceasefire strategy is to minimize the use of law enforcement sanctions and maximize the use of community intervention; holding violent perpetrators accountable is necessary both to provide justice to victims and families but also to be able to stem ongoing cycles of retaliation.
- ii. The Ceasefire unit's focused enforcement on violence drivers is impeded by staffing shortages and by being diverted to address other crimes. Current staffing levels don't allow the Ceasefire section to fulfill its focused enforcement responsibilities, given the violence in Oakland and the number of ongoing conflicts.¹
- iii. This issue is attributed to broader structural and leadership challenges within the Department. The OPD's organizational shift, particularly with the creation of the Violent Crime Operations Center (VCOC) in 2021, by the former Chief of Police, prioritized solving past crimes to boost clearance rates. However, this strategy fails to yield sustainable crime reductions, as evidenced by a declining homicide clearance rate from 50% in 2020 to 35% in 2022. The focus on solving past crimes appears to contribute to the creation of new crimes, ultimately straining the OPD's resources and exacerbating the challenge of solving crimes effectively.

b. Recommendations:

- i. Disband the VCOC due to the lack of focus on preventing violence and addressing current violence trends at the area level
- ii. Fully staff the Ceasefire Unit to allow them to focus on multiple active conflicts simultaneously
- iii. Combine the Ceasefire Unit, and the Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC), under one chain of command
- iv. Put the Crime Reduction Teams (CRTs) back into the geographic areas
 1. Fully staff the area-based CRTs with a prioritization for areas most impacted by gun violence
- v. The Assistant Chief of Police should manage the Ceasefire Unit with a focus on reducing gun violence.
- vi. Area based CRTs impacted by gun violence should have person specific plans that complement the Ceasefire units plans to reduce gun violence.

¹ The diminished staffing (16-20 in 2023, compared to a peak of 32-40) restricts their ability to address these conflicts effectively.

- vii. Ceasefire and CRT gun violence plans should be managed by the Assistant Chief of Police

Management and Governance

As supported by agency staff interviewed, the Ceasefire strategy lacks effective management and a clear chain of supervision at various levels within both the DVP and the OPD. There are individuals who do aspects of the work, but no one with the authority to manage *all* of it with clarity on the performance indicators. This is a departure from the prior strategy implementation from 2011-2018.

Beginning with the **Ceasefire Director position**, it is crucial that this position aligns to the original design of the role which had significantly more authority and access to the mayor and executive leadership in both the OPD and DVP. Because of the breadth of the position, focus on strong project management skills are necessary and we recommend that the director position have the direct reporting relationship to the Chief of Police and to the Mayor per the Executive Directive issued in 2015.²

Additionally, given the amount of work that the director is responsible for, the management of the strategy should be expanded to include a **data position** that works with the director to ensure that data is analyzed and shared with DVP consistently and that grants are applied for and effectively managed. Finally, a **community engagement specialist position** is needed to grow community partnerships.

For the strategy to be successful, we recommend that the mayor, upon assessing the findings of this audit, restart the **Ceasefire performance review meetings** in February 2024 and continue them quarterly throughout the year. We also recommend that the new DVP chief have regular meetings with the Mayor and City Administrator where she and her team are held accountable for outcomes related to Ceasefire clients.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the mayor and her staff will need to make clear who is responsible for gun violence reduction. To do this, she will need to build a **cohesive management team focused on gun violence reduction** with clear performance indicators for this strategy to begin yielding results. This team needs to include the DVP Chief, and her lead staff focused on gun violence reduction. Under the current organization this would need to include individuals responsible for Life Coaching and Violence Interruption and from OPD this should include the Chief of Police, Assistant Chief of Police, Ceasefire Captain, and Ceasefire Director. This team will need support and regular engagement with the Mayor's Senior Public Safety staff and the City Administrator's office. The team will also need to be managed rigorously and regularly to ensure they are resourced, focused on the right people, and applying the appropriate interventions to reduce gun violence in the near term.

² Ceasefire Executive Directive, October 14, 2015, Mayor Libby Schaaf