# **DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY**

###  Center for Neighborhood Revitalization and Research

**DOVER PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD**

**Year 3 Quarter 4 (July – September 2022)**

**Project Assessment Report**

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**Background**

To address violent crime in the City of Dover, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Delaware has partnered with NCALL[[1]](#footnote-1), the Delaware State University Center for Neighborhood Revitalization and Research, the State of Delaware Department of Correction, and the Dover Police Department to collaboratively create and execute RAAP.  RAAP is a U.S. Attorney’s Office reentry strategy that utilizes two ex-offenders to augment and expand existing efforts targeting violent criminal activity in Dover.  Serving as violence disrupters in the target area, the two ex-offenders, referred to as Engagement Specialists, use a community needs assessment strategy which seeks to deter and de-escalate ongoing violent criminal activity, essentially serving as force multipliers for the District’s Project Safe Neighborhoods violent crime reduction strategy.  Through this engagement, the Engagement Specialists assess individual and family needs and make linkages to services. Through relationships with residents, the community-based providers assess the circle of care, positive influencers, and negative instigators. This information allows the caseworkers to facilitate activities to prevent or deter potentially violent interactions in the neighborhood.

The project is referred to as Dover Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). Preliminary work began in the fall of 2018 with Engagement Specialist services initiated in February 2019. Federal funding was secured, and the formal partnership was established in May 2019.

**Role of Center for Neighborhood Revitalization and Research (CNRR)**

Delaware State University’s Center for Neighborhood Revitalization and Research (CNRR) serves as the research partner, providing data to guide the project as well as assess the project’s impact on reducing violent crime. In this role, CNRR assists NCALL and the Dover Police Department in meeting their project goals and objectives. As the research partner, the CNRR:

1. Provides assessment reports at least quarterly. Assessment reports will include, at a minimum, analysis of crime data in community engagement areas, similar areas not receiving community engagement, and the City of Dover. Assessment reports will also include updates on project implementation and impact, evaluating goal and object achievement for both NCALL and the Dover Police Department. Quarterly assessments document progress toward goal achievement, including but not limited to community resident needs, service referrals, strengths, influencers, instigators, and views on police/community relations. Assessment reports, designed to guide project implementation and impact as well as inform expansion and continuation of the collaborative intervention, are provided quarterly.
2. Collaborates with partners in completing required reporting, including the final report.
3. Participates in the Dover PSN Task Force.
4. Identifies, trains, and supervises DSU student interns.
5. Maintains at least weekly communication with NCALL and DPD.
6. Facilitates training and workshops. The training and workshops address describing and defining crime and other neighborhood problems based on data and developing the continuum of strategies based on research and evidence-based practice related to the identified neighborhood problems.
7. Collects and analyses project data, including monitoring collection and transfer of community engagement data, analyzing community engagement data, and requesting and analyzing crime data related to proposed projects.

**Dover PSN Outcome Measures and Assessment Methodology**

The Dover PSN team established three outcome goals.

1. Reduce violence as measured by arrest data by 10% by the end of the project. The CNRR requests arrest data and heat maps from the Dover Police Department on an annual basis. The data is provided by geographical location representing where the Engagement Specialist is providing community services. The CNRR compares the arrest data across years to determine changes in arrest rates by crime category and to assess if the project has achieved its outcome. The Dover Police Department also provides arrest data for three comparable areas not receiving PSN services. Tracking arrest rates in comparison neighborhoods allows the CNRR to assess if the PSN intervention contributes to reduced violence.
2. Increase community engagement and service connection by engaging 240 community residents each year for a total of 600 by the end of the project and connecting at least 40% of them to needed services. NCALL Engagement Specialists send case notes and summary data to the CNRR quarterly. The CNRR tracks the number of residents engaged and the number connected to services to determine if the outcome was achieved. The CNRR also summarizes a sample of the case notes periodically to provide a more detailed picture of the Engagement Specialists' work conducted in the community.
3. Increase sense of safety in the communities receiving community engagement and service connection by at least 25%, therefore more residents will report feeling safe by the end of the project compared to the number at the beginning of the project. The CNRR developed a community survey in collaboration with DSU student interns and the Dover PSN team. The DSU student interns are trained to administer the surveys. Survey administration occurs at least annually. The CNRR analyses the surveys and provides the findings to the Dover PSN team to use in guiding their work.

**PSN Engagement Specialist Activities**

The PSN Engagement Specialists provide a range of services in two communities, Downtown and Simon Circle. The goal of the project is to increase community engagement and service connection by engaging 240 community residents each year for a total of 600 by the end of the project and connecting at least 40% of them to needed services. Chart 1 shows that during Year 3 the PSN engagement specialists worked with 266 community members, exceeding the target by 110%. In addition, the Engagement Specialists also maintain contact with community members engaged in previous quarters. They have, on average, 1050 contacts with community members per quarter.

The PSN project also aims to connect at least 40% of community residents to services. During Year 3, the Engagement Specialists provided services to over 200 community members. The Engagement Specialist provided multiple services and/or service connections to many of the community members. In sum, the Engagement Specialists connected or provided services to over 70% of the community members they engaged, well over the targeted 40%. In Year 3, Engagement Specialists have increased their attention to reducing violence by engaging with positive influencers to create safer communities and by engaging with negative influencers and community members with gang affiliations to reduce the likelihood of violent interactions or situations. As indicated in Chart 2, the Engagement Specialists made a concerted effort to increase interactions to de-escalate potentially violent incidents and to intervene in gang-related interactions. Over the course of the year, they facilitated nine de-escalations and intervened in gang related activities 156 times. They engaged with seven negative influencers and 515 positive influencers.

Year 3 Total 515

**PSN Impact on Crime**

The PSN project is based on the work of the Engagement Specialists that will help to make communities safer and, in turn, reduce police reports. The PSN evaluation partner and the Dover Police Department, also a PSN partner, have worked to identify a crime data source that aligns with quarterly reporting. Beginning in January 2021, DPD began providing more time-sensitive crime data to supplement the annual crime data. The annual crime data, including arrest data and heat maps, aggregates criminal activity for the entire year but is not available until several months after the end of the year. As such, up-to-date information is needed to inform interventions in a timely manner. To meet this need, the DPD provides quarterly police reports. The police reports record the daily reports submitted by DPD officers. The PSN Task Force reviewed the police report data and decided it was beneficial for project planning and should be updated quarterly.

Data collected from the DPD police reports have been coded and categorized into five different groups such as crimes against a person, firearm offenses, drug offenses, crimes against properties, and miscellaneous or other crimes reported. Below are charts displaying the number of police reports for three service communities and three comparison communities. Communities listed in the blue lines represent the PSN service communities, while the yellow/gold lines represent the comparison communities. Although Manchester is listed as a service community, it is important to note that the Engagement Specialists have not initiated work in this community. Due to the size of these communities, the number of reports is low, and its fluctuation makes it difficult to properly assess trends and differences between the communities. Thus, the presentation is strictly for descriptive purposes and to provide a more time-sensitive picture of criminal activity in the listed communities for the Task Force partners. At this point in the project, it is considered preliminary and cannot be used to assess the impact of the PSN services and efforts.

**DPD Police Report Data**

**Chart 3** shows the number of police reports for crimes against a person. Crimes against a person include felony and misdemeanor crimes, such as assault, rape, offensive touching, harassment, terroristic threatening, aggravated menacing, reckless endangering, and other crimes that include potential harm to a person.

The number of reports for crimes against a person fluctuated slightly in most communities. However, crimes against a person drastically increased in one service community (Manchester) after reporting a drastic decrease previous quarter. Capitol Green (comparison community) reported a little over 50% increase in crime since January 2022. Other communities (service and comparison) did not report any drastic changes. Although Manchester Square was identified as a service community, Engagement Specialists have not worked in this community.

**Chart 4** includes all reports in which a firearm was noted, including possession of a firearm, theft of a firearm, and carrying a concealed weapon.

Arrests for this category do not frequently occur enough to make comparisons across the quarters or the communities. However, Simon Circle reported its first offense for the year 2022; other communities did not report any significant increase or decrease in crime.

**Chart 5** shows the police reports taken for drug offenses, including all reports in which drugs were noted, possession, possession with intent to distribute, driving under the influence, and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Drug reports in both communities had little to no fluctuation for July through August 2022.

**Chart 6** indicates the police reports for felony and misdemeanor property offenses, including burglary, theft, forgery, and shoplifting.

Reports for property offenses in one service area (Downtown) significantly decreased. In contrast, there were minor fluctuations reported amongst both service and comparison communities.

**Chart 7** shows the number of reports for other offenses. This category includes all reports in which the police responded to a citizen in a distressing mental health state, breach of release, criminal mischief, and conspiracy.

Reports for other offenses slightly fluctuated in both service and comparison communities, but there was no major changes.

**Chart 8** shows the total number of offenses reported within each community. This will make it easier to tally and observe changes in the behavior of the residents over time, thus concluding whether crime is increasing or decreasing over time.

**Summary**

As noted at the beginning of this report, the information presented is preliminary and is intended as descriptive information to better understand the communities and the work of the Engagement Specialists. Changes in crime reports in service communities cannot be correlated to PSN activities at this time. Similarly, service and comparison community crime data cannot be precisely examined with the limited data provided in this report.

At the beginning of 2022, the data provided shows that one service area (Downtown) continues to decrease in crime but remains to have the highest crime rate among the other communities. Once again, crimes against a person have been committed the most surpassing all other categories and/or crimes within the community. All in all, crime equally fluctuated in both service and comparison communities. Manchester, Simon Circle (service communities), and Capitol Green (comparison community) each had a steady increase in crime since the last quarter, while all other areas saw a minor decrease. Once again combined, service areas reported more crime than the comparison communities – Capitol Green again remains the highest comparison community with the reported crime.

Despite the limitations of the crime data, the service data clearly shows that the Engagement Specialists are meeting the project’s target goals. They are engaged with and assist many residents in the two service active communities. They have garnered the trust of the residents and their interactions with positive influencers in the community have increased steadily over the past year as they are gaining the trust of negative instigators. They also are increasingly able to intercede in interactions that have the potential for violence and intervene in gang-related activities. Establishing trust and rapport, particularly as an outsider to a community, is a lengthy process, requiring consistency, patience, persistence, and flexibility. The level of trust and community engagement achieved by the Engagement Specialist in three years is impressive and promising.

The assessment data for Quarter 4 aligns with data presented in previous reports. Similarly, the findings suggest a continued focus on:

1. Continue to strengthen and expand Engagement Specialists efforts to de-escalate potentially adverse and/or violent activities in the service communities, efforts to intervene in gang-related interventions, and interactions with negative instigators.
2. Continue to track crime data to provide descriptive information about the criminal activity in each of the communities and begin to assess the Engagement Specialists’ impact on reducing crime.
3. It is also recommended that police activities, such as community policing and other interventions, in service and comparison communities, be documented.
1. The partnering service provider changed in 2021 from Peace by Piece Peers Mentoring Center to NCALL. The two Engagement Specialist remained the same. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)