

Group Violence Problem Analysis

Introduction

The National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC) advises cities implementing the Group Violence Intervention and other public safety strategies nationwide. As part of that process, NNSC works with frontline practitioners to perform a problem analysis, a research exercise that uses data and practitioner knowledge to uncover local violence dynamics. In most cities, a very small number of people involved in groups are responsible for a disproportionate amount of serious violence. The facts learned from the problem analysis provide stakeholders with a shared understanding of group involvement and other characteristics of homicides and nonfatal shootings, allowing them to design effective interventions.

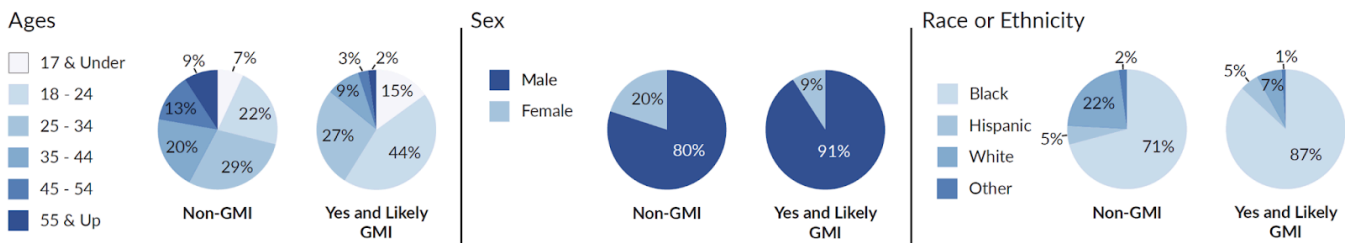
What is a group?

The term “group” refers to any social network whose members commit violent crimes together. Groups can include anything from chapters of organized national gangs to loose neighborhood “crews,” “sets,” or family networks with no hierarchy or business.

How it works

The problem analysis consists of a group audit and an incident review. During these research exercises, an NNSC strategic advisor asks questions of police officers and other frontline law enforcement personnel, such as probation and parole officers, in order to draw upon their knowledge of group violence.

The group audit reviews all active groups, identifying violent groups, rivalries and alliances among groups, sizes of groups, location of groups, influential group members, and levels of violence and organization.

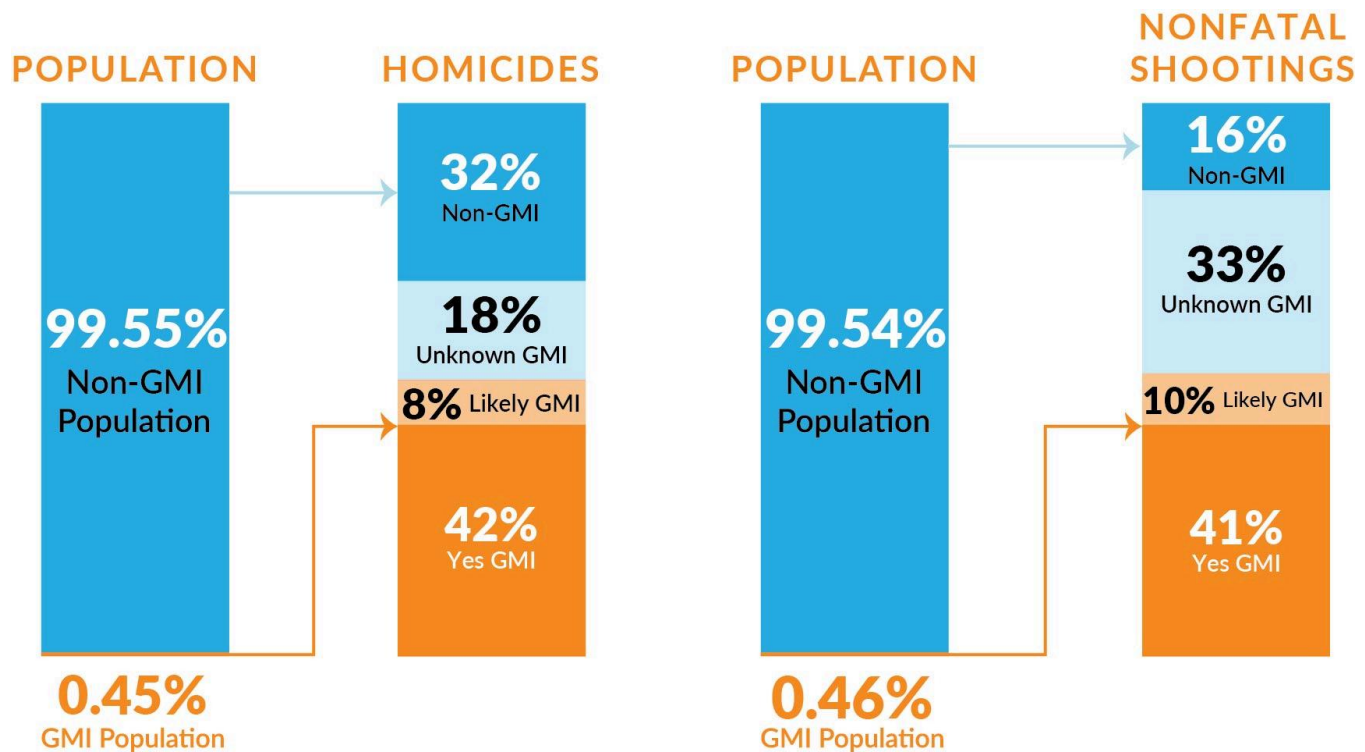


The incident review unpacks each homicide and nonfatal shooting over a specified period, identifying group member-involved homicides and shootings, motives and context (beefs, drug business, robbery, domestic dispute, etc.), patterns of violence, highly active groups and people, and emerging trends.

In most cities, prior to the problem analysis, the best existing official data does not provide a clear picture of violence dynamics. When practitioners discuss these questions, it allows for a more actionable picture of group violence to emerge.

Problem analysis insights

NNSC captures the information from the problem analysis and produces a report for the city's use. When collected in this way, the data provides cities with a variety of practical insights about patterns of violence. For example, violence is typically concentrated among a very small number of people: On average, groups representing less than 0.5% of a city's population are involved in 42% of homicides and 41% of nonfatal shootings. Understanding a city's specific trends will help practitioners move forward.



Conclusion

The initial problem analysis provides foundational data to inform a violence intervention that addresses the local problem. Over time, cities must maintain information on groups by periodically refreshing the group audit and establishing standing shooting reviews. These measures will help sustain violence reductions for the long term.