



Study
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Reducing Murder: A Community Response

A Report to the
Citizens of Jacksonville

REDUCING MURDER: A COMMUNITY RESPONSE

A STRATEGY REPORT TO THE CITIZENS OF
JACKSONVILLE

Prepared by the Jacksonville Community Council Inc.
(JCCI)

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A STRATEGY FOR REDUCING MURDER

Introduction

Jacksonville has a serious murder problem despite the fact that, in many ways, the community is getting safer. The rates of violent crime have declined significantly over the past 15 years, and the murder rate in 2005 is less than half that of 1990. Nationally, Jacksonville's murder rate is in the middle of the pack among similar-sized cities. However, Duval County's murder rate per capita has consistently ranked the highest or second-highest in Florida for the past 17 years and has been increasing since 2001, with an extraordinarily high number of murders in the first half of 2006. Every murder is an unacceptable tragedy, and nearly all are preventable.

The committee examined the complex individual, environmental, and social factors that influence the murder rate in Jacksonville and reviewed national research on successful approaches to lower murder rates. As a result, the committee recommends the following comprehensive strategy to address and lower the incidence of murder in Jacksonville.

The core of the strategy is full community involvement in directly confronting violent behavior and addressing the underlying factors behind Jacksonville's murder rate. No single solution exists. Instead, the community needs to work together to implement a broad approach to reducing violence.

Important Themes

Murder is a problem for the whole community: In Jacksonville, some areas of town are better insulated from the rash of killings than others. Murders in particular tend to cluster in certain high-poverty areas. Murder disproportionately involves young black men, both as perpetrators and as victims. This has been true for many years, and has allowed many in the community to think of violence and murder as somebody else's problem, delegated to law enforcement. While law enforcement is an important partner in making the community safe, the committee echoes the Sheriff's statement that "we cannot arrest our way out of this problem." Unchecked, murder spreads, impacting every area of the community, from the safety of its people to the capacity to address social issues and the ability to grow the city's economy. Leadership from elected officials, especially the Mayor, is critical to the solution, but the issue of violence and murder in Jacksonville cannot be the sole responsibility of politicians to solve. Stronger leadership in the black community is required to confront violence, and stronger leadership in the white community is needed to support and provide resources for anti-violence approaches. A united effort with full community ownership, including neighborhood residents, the business community, and faith-based leadership, is vital: murder in Jacksonville is everyone's problem.

Racial divisions cannot be ignored: While many cities face racial divisions, the racial divide in Jacksonville is both profound and entrenched. Much of the black-on-black violence in Jacksonville is a symptom of deep neighborhood-level dysfunctions, growing out of years of segregation, oppression, institutional racism, and racial blindness in the larger community. These neighborhood-level dysfunctions manifest themselves in higher infant mortality rates and racial disparities in health outcomes, achievement gaps in the school system, multi-generational economic disparities, and in violence. The committee struggled with how to report on the racial nature of Jacksonville's murder rate (where 62 percent of the victims and 59 percent of the known suspects are black), fearing the white community might not support efforts to address the problem because it valued the lives of black people less than if the victims were white. This historical and current institutionalized racism breeds social mistrust and friction, between blacks and whites and between minority neighborhoods and law enforcement. There is deep desire among residents of this City for racial healing.

Boys need help to become nonviolent men: The lack of positive male role models for many boys and young men in Jacksonville results in increased violence, as boys emulate the violent, tough male figures portrayed in the media. Young black males are especially at risk, both because of a greater lack of positive male role models and the highly violent subculture portrayed in rap music and associated media.

Reducing violence demands raising hope: Racial and economic isolation, combined with a childhood of witnessing violence, leaves many children with a feeling of hopelessness. These children grow up without any confidence of a brighter future, and do not act in ways to plan for the future. The lack of economic security and chronic stress associated with this insecurity make many problems worse, and people in these situations are more likely to turn to violence. For those without hope, living in Jacksonville neighborhoods with murder rates so high the streets are more dangerous than for a soldier serving in Iraq, threats of long-term punishment have little to no meaning.

Prevention is the highest priority: The long-term answer to reducing violence and lowering the murder rate is prevention. Prevention approaches cost less and have far greater impact than anything else. The outcomes of prevention approaches extend far beyond lower murder rates; because the risk factors are interrelated, prevention approaches address multiple community problems. Successful prevention programs result in improved education outcomes, economic vitality, and better health, as well as reductions in violence. To address this issue, then, Jacksonville must generate and dedicate local funds to effective prevention programs, not relying on intermittent funding through external grant cycles. While the community must adequately fund a criminal justice system to respond to violent actions, to solve the problem prevention programs must be as high a funding priority as law enforcement.

Ending the violence requires rehabilitation: For those caught in a cycle of criminal activity, rehabilitation is often the answer to end the violence. This usually means addressing the problems that existed before the individual turned to crime, such as education, job skills training, and drug treatment. It also means addressing the burdens a criminal record can add, including loss of some civil rights, disqualification from some government services, and barriers to employment.

Recommendations

The strategy recognizes that both immediate reversal of current trends in murder and long-term resolution of community problems are needed. The sharp rise in murders in 2006 requires specific, targeted efforts to immediately address violent behavior and resolve the current murder crisis. At the same time, Jacksonville must confront the social and economic factors identified as influencing the murder rate. This will involve partnering with community efforts already underway, including Blueprint for Prosperity, to improve social and economic conditions across Jacksonville.

Recommended actions are separated into two broad categories:

- **Immediate:** The first two recommendations are designed to have quick, short-term results. These steps include halting murder and getting guns off the street. These recommendations need to be implemented quickly and fully to save lives, and then continue to be used in order to keep the community safe.
- **Long-term:** Other recommended actions will address longer-term, underlying factors behind violence and murder and will demonstrate results over the years. These recommendations address prevention of violent behavior, rehabilitation of those already involved in violence, and specific actions designed to address risk factors such as illicit drugs and domestic violence. While these actions are labeled “long-term,” implementation of these recommendations should also begin right away.

Immediate

To quickly reduce the murder rate in Jacksonville, the highest priority strategies are to impact the murders committed by young men acting in groups and to get guns off the street.

Recommendation 1. Target the killing among young adult men: Jacksonville has many young men (ages 18-35), particularly young black men, who tend to associate in groups drawn into illegal and violent behavior that directly leads to murder rate. While these groups may not be organized as “gangs” (as the term is popularly understood), the reality on the street is that they are affected by group dynamics that often escalate into violence over perceived insults and “disrespect.” The group norms they set and exhibit influence the upcoming generation of youth in these neighborhoods, who begin to form similar groups while in middle school.

- The Mayor, through expansion of the Seeds of Change: Growing Great Neighborhoods initiative, should partner with local neighborhood leaders and organizations, faith-based leaders, and MAD DADS, to implement the Ceasefire process used successfully in Boston’s Operation Ceasefire. This approach enlists the community in communicating a clear, combined message to targeted young people that they are part of the community, their behavior is damaging the community, and these behaviors must stop. This proven process has quickly and dramatically reduced murders in Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, and other U.S. cities.
- For this approach to work, it must be led by a catalyst (individual or organization) from within Jacksonville’s black community. While government can and must support the initiative, too much mistrust exists for this effort to be led by existing government institutions. The committee strongly recommends bringing in an outside expert facilitator to assist with this process and train local facilitators to continue the work.
- The Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office and State Attorney’s Office should fully support this initiative by sending young people the message that the entire group will be held accountable if a member of the group kills.
- In conjunction with this initiative, all community social service organizations, education institutions, and employers should step forward with assistance to young people seeking a way out of violent, self-destructive behaviors.

Recommendation 2. Get illegal guns off the street: Anger and violence more readily result in murder if a firearm is present. Jacksonville has too many illegal guns in the community, too many people with guns who should not have them, and too easy access to firearms.

- The Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office should increasingly target those who use guns to commit crimes, and work to ensure that violent offenders with firearms are arrested and removed from the community.
- The Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, with support from the Mayor and the business community, should implement a Gun Bounty Program, similar to the one in Charleston, South Carolina. The gun bounty program (not a gun buyback program) should include substantial financial rewards for information leading to arrests and confiscation of illegal guns. With law enforcement, the State Attorney’s Office, and the judicial system working together, the program should include other incentives for turning in illicit guns, such as reduced sentencing in a plea bargain agreement for offenders facing criminal charges.
- The Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office should continue to work with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to attack on illicit firearm trafficking through the Operation Safe Streets initiative, using the Operation Ceasefire model.

Long-term

Preventing future murders requires addressing a series of underlying problems and risk factors identified in this report. While actions to lower the murder rate cannot wait until Jacksonville solves all social ills, serious efforts to reduce violence must include strong, sustained efforts to deal with the specific factors that often lead to violent behavior.

Recommendation 3. Admit and address racism: The cycle of violence in the community will not end until Jacksonville admits and addresses its racism problem. Racial discrimination and race-based disparities fuel a cultural divide and a sense of hopelessness that breeds violence. Previous JCCI studies, including *Young Black Males*, *Beyond the Talk: Improving Race Relations*, and the *Race Relations Progress Report*, have outlined racial disparities and incidents of racism in the community and recommended actions to address the problems. Rather than creating new recommendations, the committee strongly recommends the implementation of the recommended actions from these studies.

Recommendation 4. Fund successful programs: If Jacksonville is serious about addressing the murder rate, it must dramatically increase dedicated funding for successful programs and expand them where appropriate. Prevention efforts cost money up front, but provide an enormous return on investment. Successful efforts to reduce violence too often are limited in the numbers they can serve or eliminated in future funding cycles in favor of untried programs. The Human Services Council should assess existing prevention programs and recommend to its funding partners, including the City of Jacksonville, to increase funding for early violence prevention and intervention programs that work, such as the Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (INVEST) and the Ready4Work program.

Recommendation 5. Provide strong positive male role models: The community must do more to provide strong male role models for young men in Jacksonville, especially those currently lacking a positive father figure in their lives. Murder is primarily a male phenomenon in Jacksonville, with 91 percent of known murder suspects and 76 percent of victims being men. The Human Services Council and the United Way of Northeast Florida's Helping At-Risk Students Achieve initiative, in partnership with the City Council and other leaders of the local mentoring movement, should support, fund, publicize, and expand the capacity of its mentoring programs, such as the Big Brothers Big Sisters program for children with an incarcerated parent, to target these young men. Mentoring can help these young men not only academically, but also professionally as they become a positive contribution to society and become positive role models for others. For example, the PACE Center for Girls is a successful school program targeting at-risk girls; similar programs directly targeted to young males, such as Jacksonville Marine Institute, should be created or expanded.

Recommendation 6. Improve economic opportunity: Jacksonville needs to break its cycle of poverty and exclusion by providing more economic opportunity and resources, especially to young people. Job skills training, a public transportation system that better links jobs and the workforce, and access to jobs that pay a living wage are critical. WorkSource, the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce, the African American Chamber of Commerce, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority and the City of Jacksonville need to direct specific attention to the needs of alienated young black men. The strategies outlined in the Blueprint for Prosperity (and other economic development initiatives) to raise per capita income should include measures of geography, racial disparity, and age, such as unemployment data by race and neighborhood, to focus efforts on improving opportunity in the highest-risk neighborhoods.

Recommendation 7. Improve the relationship between law enforcement and the community: The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office should accelerate its efforts to implement community policing techniques, using models successfully implemented in communities such as Tampa and San Diego. For too many people in too many neighborhoods law enforcement is not seen as a partner or protector. To change these attitudes toward the police, the community

and law enforcement must work together to address the murder rate. In addition, employees of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office should expand participation in community dialogues with the neighborhoods they serve, using the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission's Study Circles model, as outlined in the Growing Great Neighborhoods initiative.

Recommendation 8. Address the culture of violence: Jacksonville needs a community culture that has greater respect for others and values life more highly. The Mayor's Office of Faith and Community Based Partnerships should coordinate efforts of faith-based organizations and coalitions as they work together to engage the community in speaking out forcefully against violence and participating in anti-violence initiatives. Duval County Public Schools should place greater emphasis on its existing nonviolence curriculum, involving the community as needed to share the message.

Recommendation 9. Differentiate drug traffickers from users: Illegal drug markets are a scourge in Jacksonville, feeding addiction and encouraging violence and murder. Traffickers in illegal drugs should be targeted and punished; users of illegal drugs should receive treatment. The committee supports a two-pronged approach:

- The committee by no means endorses drug use. However, Jacksonville's criminal justice system should continue to focus law enforcement efforts primarily on drug traffickers, rather than users.
- The Florida Department of Children and Families District 4 Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Office should lead a community effort to provide more treatment facilities for those already addicted to drugs and successful prevention programs to keep people from becoming addicted.

Recommendation 10. Target domestic violence: Jacksonville has effective programs to assist children who witness violence and programs for intervention in potentially lethal domestic violence situations. The problem is that these programs are insufficiently funded to meet the community's needs. Jacksonville needs to reprioritize its funding because violence is a learned behavior, and too often that violence is learned at home.

- The City of Jacksonville, the United Way of Northeast Florida, the Department of Children and Families, the Jacksonville Children's Commission, and faith-based institutions must fully support and expand existing domestic violence prevention and intervention projects to meet community needs.
- In addition, the Fourth Judicial Circuit Court should create a Domestic Violence Court, similar to the Drug Court model, to improve consistency in intervention in domestic violence cases.
- The Fourth Judicial Circuit Court should mandate ongoing judicial training in domestic violence issues for all judges.

Recommendation 11. Help children succeed in school: Jacksonville has too many children who leave school without graduating. This is of particular concern because education is critical to creating an engaged, productive life in the community. Poor education and low literacy are risk factors for criminal activity and violent behavior, with high rates of high school dropouts among those incarcerated.

- Duval County Public Schools should eliminate out-of-school suspensions as punishment, since that sends children away from school and can provide opportunities for delinquent behavior.
- The Duval County Public Schools should expand its work with the community to reduce the dropout rate, decrease truancy, and keep children in school, regardless of FCAT implications.
- The United Way of Northeast Florida's Helping At-Risk Students Achieve initiative should work with the Jacksonville Children's Commission and other entities to expand after-school programs that encourage student achievement and help parents get involved in their children's education.

Recommendation 12. Rehabilitate inmates and ex-offenders: Offenders need to be punished. However, for those who go to prison and pay their debt to society, the obstacles to re-entry into society are often far too high, encouraging marginalization, hopelessness, and a return to antisocial activity and violence. Lower barriers to re-entry and transitional services for released offenders can help reduce violence in the community. For those already involved in criminal activity and the criminal justice system, rehabilitation efforts can decrease recidivism and bring people back as contributors to and protectors of a safer community.

- **Facilitate re-entry into the community:** The Jacksonville Re-Entry Center is a major step forward in addressing the service needs of ex-offenders. However, the transitional needs of ex-offenders continue to outstrip the services available. The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Department of Corrections should lead a community effort to provide more transition support for ex-offenders, enhancing current transitional programs and increasing the number and availability of such programs. Businesses should partner with agencies helping ex-offenders. Models such as the Delancey Street Project in San Francisco should be considered for Jacksonville.
- **Mentor inmates to help turn them around:** The Jacksonville community should expand on current successful efforts like Inside/Outside House to provide support for juvenile and adult offenders to turn their lives around. The Department of Corrections should involve the faith community, businesses, and others in providing mentors for those in the system who will continue mentoring the ex-offenders as they transition back into the community.
- **Prepare inmates for employment after release:** The Florida Legislature should make employment skills training mandatory for all inmates of the state prison system.
- **Review sentencing guidelines:** The Florida Legislature should review state sentencing guidelines, especially those that classify certain non-violent offenses as felonies, to remove lifetime stigmatization and employment barriers for those who have served their sentences. The continuing long-term impact of passing a \$300 bad check should not be the same as engaging in drug trafficking, for example. At the same time, the Legislature and the Governor should review the process for restoration of rights for ex-offenders, easing restrictions for rehabilitated ex-offenders.

Implementation: Next Steps

Jacksonville needs to put this strategy into action without delay. Because broad community involvement is necessary and the strategy will require collaboration with multiple government agencies and private organizations, an oversight task force is required to ensure implementation.

Recommendation 13. Implement the strategy: The Mayor and Sheriff should jointly establish and fund an implementation task force with broad citizen and stakeholder participation and adequate staff support with the charge to advocate for the implementation of this strategy, monitor the results, and report the outcomes to the community semi-annually. However, implementation of the Ceasefire strategy and the gun bounty program should begin now.

FINDINGS

Findings represent a consensus of the committee's understanding of the information it received. They are derived from published materials, from facts and opinions of resource people, and from the committee members' collective experience.

Introduction

Every murder is an unacceptable tragedy.

This study was commissioned because Duval County's rate of murder per capita ranks highest in the state despite the fact that other indicators of crime, including violent crime, have declined in recent years. The rapid increase in murders in 2006 added considerable urgency to this study.

As challenging as Jacksonville's murder rate is today, the problem has been worse. As in times past, the entire community has the responsibility to address current problems and reduce the risk factors that could make murder even more prevalent in the community. Jacksonville needs effective leadership to guide a focused community response to reduce murder and create a safer community.

The study committee recognizes that violence and murder are community-wide problems. They affect each of us regardless of race, ethnicity, income or gender, yet great disparity exists in their impact among Jacksonville's neighborhoods and citizens. Recent killings have demonstrated that murder can be random, and that everyone is at risk of becoming a victim.

The study committee set out to examine the complex individual, environmental, and social factors that influence the murder rate in Jacksonville. It sought to understand the reasons for murder, relationships between perpetrators and victims, murder patterns, and locations.

The study committee attempted to identify the Jacksonville population groups at greatest risk of becoming perpetrators or victims of murder. It also explored opportunities for increased family and community involvement to address the risk factors for violent behavior and murder by examining current local efforts to reduce the murder rate and successful practices from other communities.

Strategies to reduce violence, especially murder, can be short-term interventions to affect current levels of violence or long-term solutions to affect the underlying social and individual factors that create risk and maintain potential for violent behavior. This study explored both.

Definitions

Homicide: The intentional or accidental killing of a person by another. Homicide includes murder as well as killings committed in self-defense, by accident, or with just cause.

Murder: The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program defines murder and non-negligent manslaughter as the willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another. Murder is a criminal homicide.

The classification of this offense is based solely on police investigation as opposed to the determination of a court, medical examiner, coroner, jury, or other judicial body. The UCR Program does not include the following situations in this offense classification: deaths caused

by negligence, suicide, or accident, justifiable homicides, and attempts to murder or assaults to murder, which are recorded as aggravated assaults.

Violent crime: An index of violent crime is composed of four offenses: murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. According to the UCR Program's definition, violent crimes involve force or threat of force.

Aggravated assault: The UCR Program defines aggravated assault as an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. The Program further specifies that this type of assault is usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or by other means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. Attempted aggravated assault that involves the display or threat to use a gun, knife, or other weapon is included in this crime category because serious personal injury would likely result if the assault were completed. When aggravated assault and larceny theft occur together, the offense falls under the category of robbery.

Robbery: The UCR defines robbery as the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

Forcible rape: Forcible rape, as defined by UCR, is the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Assaults and attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force are also included; however, statutory rape (without force) and other sex offenses are excluded.

Crime Rate: Crime figures are often reported as "rates," or the number of incidents per 100,000 persons in a specific geographic area or demographic category.

Misdemeanor: A crime punishable by up to a maximum incarceration sentence of one year in the State of Florida. Most misdemeanor sentences are served in the county jail or other local corrections facility. Examples of misdemeanor crimes include minor shoplifting and possession of 20 grams or less of marijuana.

Felony: A crime punishable by an incarceration sentence ranging from one year through life in prison and even the death penalty in most states. Examples of felony crimes include thefts over a certain dollar amount, aggravated assault, possession of a gun while committing a crime, and murder.

Ex-offender: A person who has served time in prison or jail for a crime and has returned to the community, either under community supervision or after being released completely from the criminal justice system.

Recidivism: The act by an ex-offender of committing crime again which results in additional incarceration and/or probationary supervision. The Florida prison system calculates recidivism as those who return to State prison as a result of having committed another crime within two years after release. Locally, the corrections system counts those who are arrested and brought to the Duval County jail within one year after release. Although they may result in the reincarceration of ex-offenders, technical violations of probation or other community supervision, such as missing a child support payment or not attending prescribed drug-abuse treatment, are not considered to be new crimes and are not counted as recidivism.

Racism: A systemic program, practice or treatment of an individual or group that is based solely on race or the color of an individual's skin. Individual racism refers to racist acts performed by one person toward another. Institutional racism refers to intentional or unintentional racist practices, policies, programs or laws by businesses, organizations, or governments.

Racial Disparity: The different experience—either greater or lesser—of one racial group compared to another that may be the result of individual racism, institutional racism, or other factors.

Violence and Murder Trends

Murder is the focus of this study; however, it is difficult to isolate murder from the larger context of violence. Therefore, the study committee reviewed both violence and murder statistics on national, state, county, and municipal levels to gain understanding of the local experience.

Crime Data

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office (JSO) and Florida's other local law enforcement agencies report crime statistics to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). In turn, FDLE forwards them to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR) has collected and published national crime statistics since 1930 and provides uniform guidelines for crime reporting by over 2,000 law enforcement agencies. JSO, FDLE, and FBI analyze the crime data and regularly report comparative crime rates and trends to the public. The committee used crime data from all three sources for this report.

Crime statistics reported in this document for *Duval County* include the combined criminal acts reported in the cities of Jacksonville, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, Jacksonville Beach, and Baldwin, plus the separate reporting jurisdictions of the University of North Florida and Jacksonville Port Authority, plus crimes reported by state agency enforcement officers operating within the county limits. Figures shown for the *City of Jacksonville* are for crimes committed within the Jacksonville city limits, exclusive of those reported by all other agencies and jurisdictions.

Jacksonville is the nation's second largest city in terms of land area and was ranked fourteenth in population by the 2000 U.S. Census. In 2005, the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research estimated Duval County's population at 861,150. Consolidation of the Duval County and City of Jacksonville governments in 1968 gave Jacksonville a unique character when three distinct community types—an inner city core, affluent suburbs, and a large rural area—were pulled together under one jurisdiction. Most cities (e.g., Orlando, Houston, and Atlanta) followed the more typical urban development pattern where growth extends outward from the core city until it meets the limits of other smaller, incorporated cities, and unincorporated rural lands surround the developed areas. Without consolidation, Jacksonville likely would have become a mid-sized central city hemmed in by smaller cities in Arlington, Southside, Westside, etc., with rural lands beyond the developed areas. Instead, consolidation made Jacksonville a large city with all three land types. This is important because crime patterns differ significantly in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

When comparing crime statistics of one city or county to another, it is important to find jurisdictions that are similar in both population size and character (e.g. age distribution, racial/ethnic diversity, and socio-economic factors, etc.) and land type (e.g., urban, suburban and rural), but it is difficult to do so. Differences in population characteristics and crime-related risk factors frustrated the study committee's efforts to draw useful comparisons between Jacksonville and other cities and Duval County and other Florida counties. Nonetheless, the committee studied local crime statistics on both county and city levels for comparison to other jurisdictions in the state and nation.

Trends

Violence

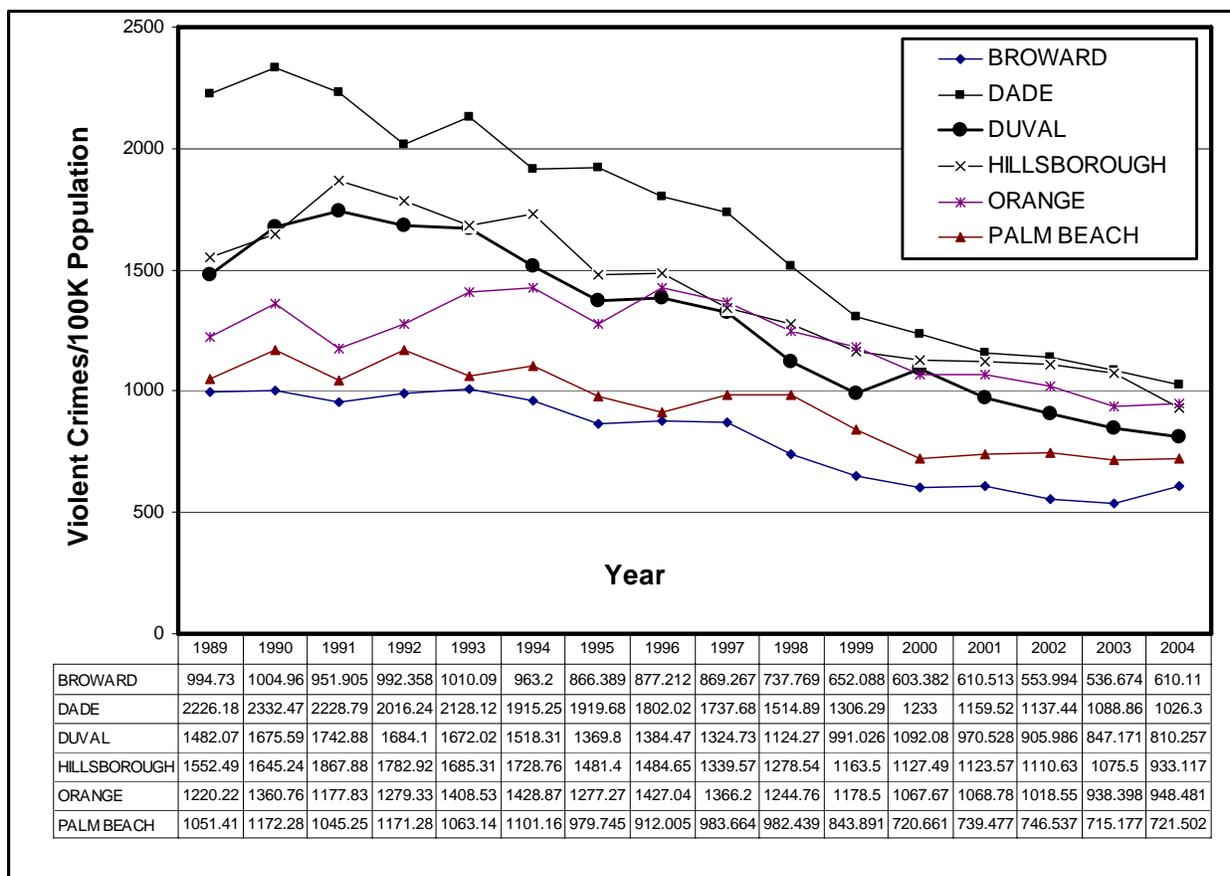
An epidemic of violence spread across the nation in the early 1990s that was blamed, in large part, on the widespread sale and use of crack cocaine and youth violence. In response to the disorder and killings associated with crack's use and its trafficking, law enforcement agencies across the country moved decisively to remove drug criminals from the streets. The courts, armed with powerful federal sentencing tools, filled the nation's prisons with drug users, sellers, traffickers, and other violent criminals. Prison populations swelled, and incidents of violent crime began to decline in what was until now a 13-year downward national trend.

Duval County experienced that epidemic of violence. According to the FDLE, violent crime in Duval County peaked in 1991 with 11,880 violent crimes, a rate of 1,743 crimes per 100,000 persons. Since then, violence has declined steadily, falling 43 percent in 2004 to 6,810 crimes, a rate of 810 per 100,000. From 1995 to 1999, Duval County's annual crime rate reduction generally outperformed the state average.

Overall violent crime in Duval County never reached the high levels experienced by Dade and Hillsborough counties in the 1990s, and those counties plus Orange County still lead Duval in the rate of violent crime (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Violent Crime Rates of Selected Florida Counties



Source: Urban Dynamics Corporation, 2006, and Total Index Crime by County, 1989-2004, http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/fsac/data_statistics.asp.

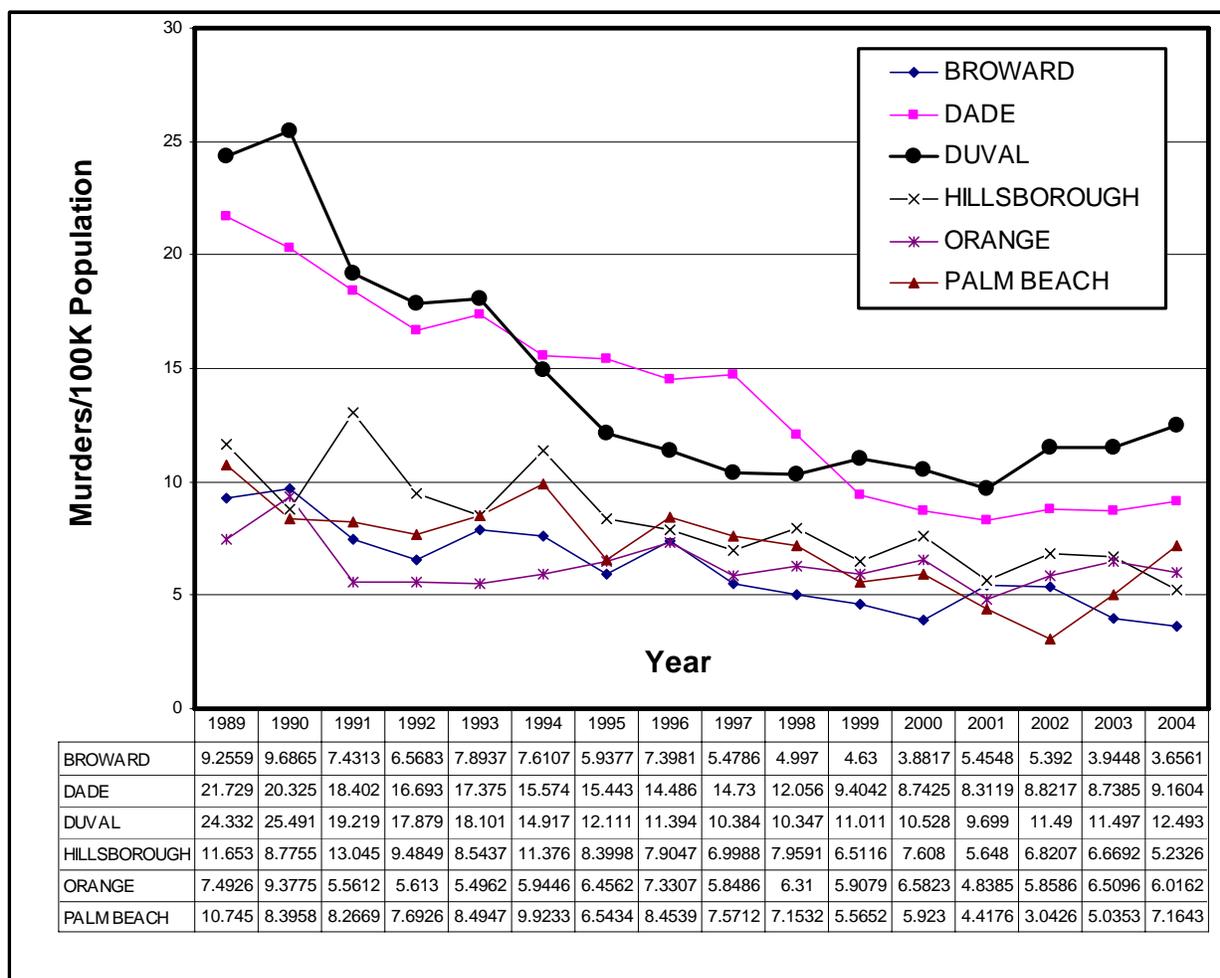
The City of Jacksonville's violent crime rate is significantly lower than other cities its size across America. In 2004, Jacksonville's violent crime rate of 826 per 100,000 compared to a national average of 911 per 100,000 among cities of 500,000 to 999,999 residents. Jacksonville is one of the 68 cities with populations of 250,000 and above classified by the FBI as a Group I city. Among this group in 2004, Jacksonville ranked 15th in population and 32nd in the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) Violent Crime Rate.

Murder

Duval County's murder rate was the highest among Florida's counties from 1989 through 1993 and again since 1999 (see Figure 2). In 2004, the City of Jacksonville ranked 25th in UCR Murder Rate among the FBI's Group I cities; Jacksonville's murder rate of 13 per 100,000 was below the average of 14 per 100,000 for comparably-sized cities nationwide.

Figure 2

Murder Rates of Selected Florida Counties



Source: Urban Dynamics Corporation, 2006, and Total Index Crime by County, 1989-2004, http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/fsac/data_statistics.asp.

City-to-city comparisons of homicide rates that take into account differences in demographic and social factors are reported annually by the Improving Crime Data (ICD) Project. The study, funded by the National Institute of Justice, looks at US cities with Year 2000 populations greater than 250,000. These cities contain about 17 percent of the nation's population but accounted for 41 percent of the homicides committed in the nation in 2004.

Although some question the methodology employed in its analysis, the ICD criminologists used a statistical model to adjust the cities' homicide rates according to their levels of certain risk factors for homicide—poverty, instability, divorce rate, and population size. The cities' rankings were re-ordered according to the adjusted rates (Table 1). An increase in rank means that a city's homicide rate is higher than expected given that community's risk factors for homicide.

Table 1

Homicide Rankings of 67 Major Cities, 2004

City	2004 Unadjusted Ranking	2004 Adjusted Ranking	City	2004 Unadjusted Ranking	2004 Adjusted Ranking
New Orleans (LA)	1	3	Boston (MA)	35	27
Baltimore (MD)	2	4	Nashville (TN)	36	23
Detroit (MI)	3	37	Long Beach (CA)	37	55
Washington, DC	4	2	Tampa (FL)	38	54
Saint Louis (MO)	5	19	Lexington (KY)	39	11
Newark (NJ)	6	25	Charlotte (NC)	40	16
Atlanta (GA)	7	46	Corpus Christi (TX)	41	21
Philadelphia (PA)	8	17	Forth Worth (TX)	42	39
Oakland (CA)	9	7	Albuquerque (NM)	43	24
Dallas (TX)	10	10	Wichita (KS)	44	20
Cincinnati (OH)	11	30	San Antonio (TX)	45	49
Kansas City (MO)	12	5	Oklahoma City (OK)	46	47
Miami (FL)	13	40	Santa Ana (CA)	47	18
Buffalo (NY)	14	42	Toledo (OH)	48	62
Cleveland (OH)	15	65	Saint Paul (MN)	49	33
Memphis (TN)	16	52	New York (NY)	50	66
Chicago (IL)	17	34	Riverside (CA)	51	41
Denver (CO)	18	6	Anchorage (AK)	52	32
Milwaukee (WI)	19	48	Portland (OR)	53	56
Phoenix (AZ)	20	9	Raleigh (NC)	54	44
Minneapolis (MN)	21	8	Mesa (AZ)	55	35
Pittsburgh (PA)	22	15	Omaha (NB)	56	43
Indianapolis (IN)	23	12	San Diego (CA)	57	59
Los Angeles (CA)	24	29	Aurora (CO)	58	58
Houston (TX)	25	31	Seattle (WA)	59	45
Jacksonville (FL)	26	13	Austin (TX)	60	63
Tulsa (OK)	27	14	Arlington (TX)	61	57
Columbus (OH)	28	22	Colorado Springs (CO)	62	60
Fresno (CA)	29	50	Virginia Beach (VA)	63	53
San Francisco (CA)	30	1	Anaheim (CA)	64	63
Sacramento (CA)	31	36	Honolulu (HI)	65	51
Las Vegas (NV)	32	28	San Jose (CA)	66	38
Louisville (KY)	33	61	El Paso (TX)	67	67
Tucson (AZ)	34	26			

Source: *Improving Crime Data* <http://www.cjgsu.net/initiatives/HomRates-2005-12-06-Score.pdf>

Jacksonville's homicide rate ranked 26th among the 67 cities listed in the most recent ICD report on 2004 homicides. When the statistical model was used to analyze Jacksonville's risk factors for murder, the city's "adjusted" ranking rose to 13th place. This increase in rank indicates that Jacksonville's homicide rate is higher than expected given the community's risk factors for homicide.

A Profile of Murder in Jacksonville

As shown in Figure 2, murders in Duval County stabilized at a rate of about 10 per 100,000 from 1997 to 2001. The murder rate began to climb in 2002 and increased to 13 per 100,000 by the

end of 2004. The rise in murders since 2001 is the particular concern of this study, especially the rise in 2006, which is well ahead of the number that occurred during the comparable period in 2005.

In order to understand why and how murders occur in Jacksonville, the committee studied JSO's crime database information summarizing the circumstance, location and detail for each of the 543 murders that occurred in Jacksonville January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2005. When relying on the data, it is important to note several factors: only 326 murder suspects have been linked to those murders, leaving 40 percent of murders without an identified suspect at this time; JSO's profile of who commits murder in Jacksonville is based on what is known about suspected killers in 60 percent of murders committed during the study period; and the murder suspect profile could change dramatically once information is known about the unidentified 40 percent of murder suspects.

JSO's in-depth analysis of murders that occurred from 2000 through 2005 revealed important information about the known suspects, victims, and circumstances of those events (see Table 2 for details):

- The majority of these murder victims, 67 percent (364), died of gunshot wounds.
- Murders were largely committed by young males (90 percent).
- A large majority, 76 percent (247), of known murder suspects had a previous criminal history at the time they were identified, with an average of 7.29 prior arrests.
- A disproportionate number of African Americans are involved with these murders. African Americans comprise 29 percent of Jacksonville's total population but accounted for 62 percent (337) of these murder victims and 59 percent (193) of these known murder suspects.
- Most of the murder victims and suspects knew one another.

Table 2

Overview of Murders in Jacksonville 2000-2005

Total Murders Committed	
2000	81
2001	75
2002	94
2003	92
2004	106
2005	<u>95</u>
TOTAL	543

Murder Suspects		
Black Males	182	56%
White Males	104	32%
White Females	19	6%
Black Females	11	3%
Asian Males	10	3%
Total	326	100%

Notes: 65% of suspects were between the ages of 15 and 29.

76% of the known suspects had a previous criminal history at the time they were identified.

Murder Victims		
Black Males	276	51%
White Males	135	25%
White Females	68	13%
Black Females	61	11%
Other	3	<0.6%
Total	543	100%

Notes: 53% of adult victims had a criminal history. Totals include rounding.

Top Five Circumstances of Murder		
Argument	107	20%
Drugs	104	19%
Robbery	102	19%
Unknown	92	17%
Domestic Violence	80	15%
Other	58	10%
Total	543	100%

Notes: "Other" includes known circumstances of murder, grouped together, excluding those incidents where the circumstances are unknown.

Causes of Death		
Gunshot Wound	364	67%
Stabbing	53	10%
Blunt Trauma	43	8%
Beaten/Battered	22	4%
Other	48	9%
Undetermined	13	2%
Total	543	100%

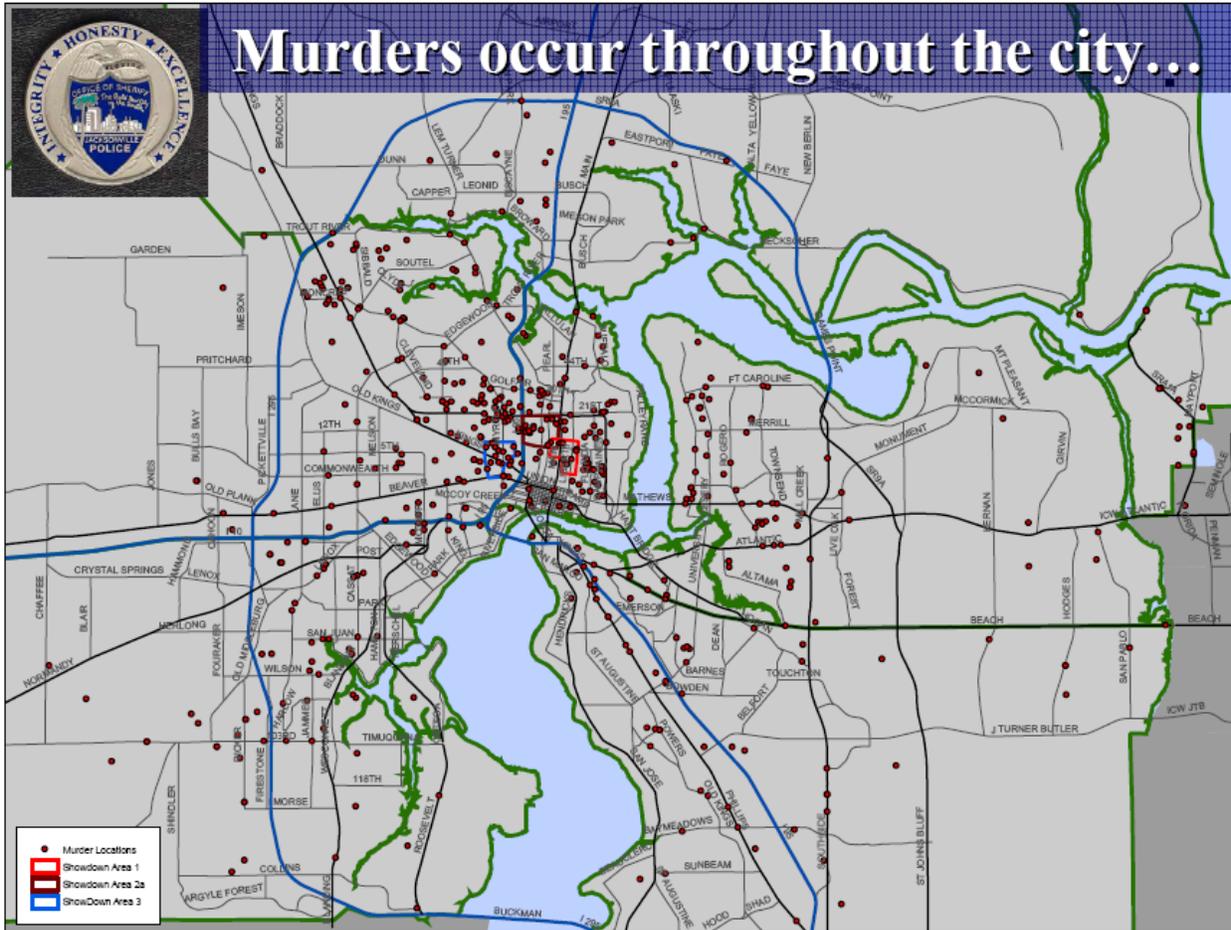
Victim and Suspect Relationship	
Acquainted	73%
Acquaintance/Friend (38%)	
Domestic Violence (14%)	
Child Abuse (8%)	
Other Family (5%)	
Other Known (8%)	
Strangers	17%
Undetermined	10%
Total	100%

Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, 2006

Map 1 displays the locations of Jacksonville's 2000-2005 murders. Murders obviously occurred throughout the city but were concentrated in the city's more densely-populated areas that have multiple socio-economic and demographic risk factors, as discussed later in this report. JSO reports that 43 percent of these murders occurred in drug arrest hotspots.

Map 1

Location of Murders in Jacksonville, 2000-2005

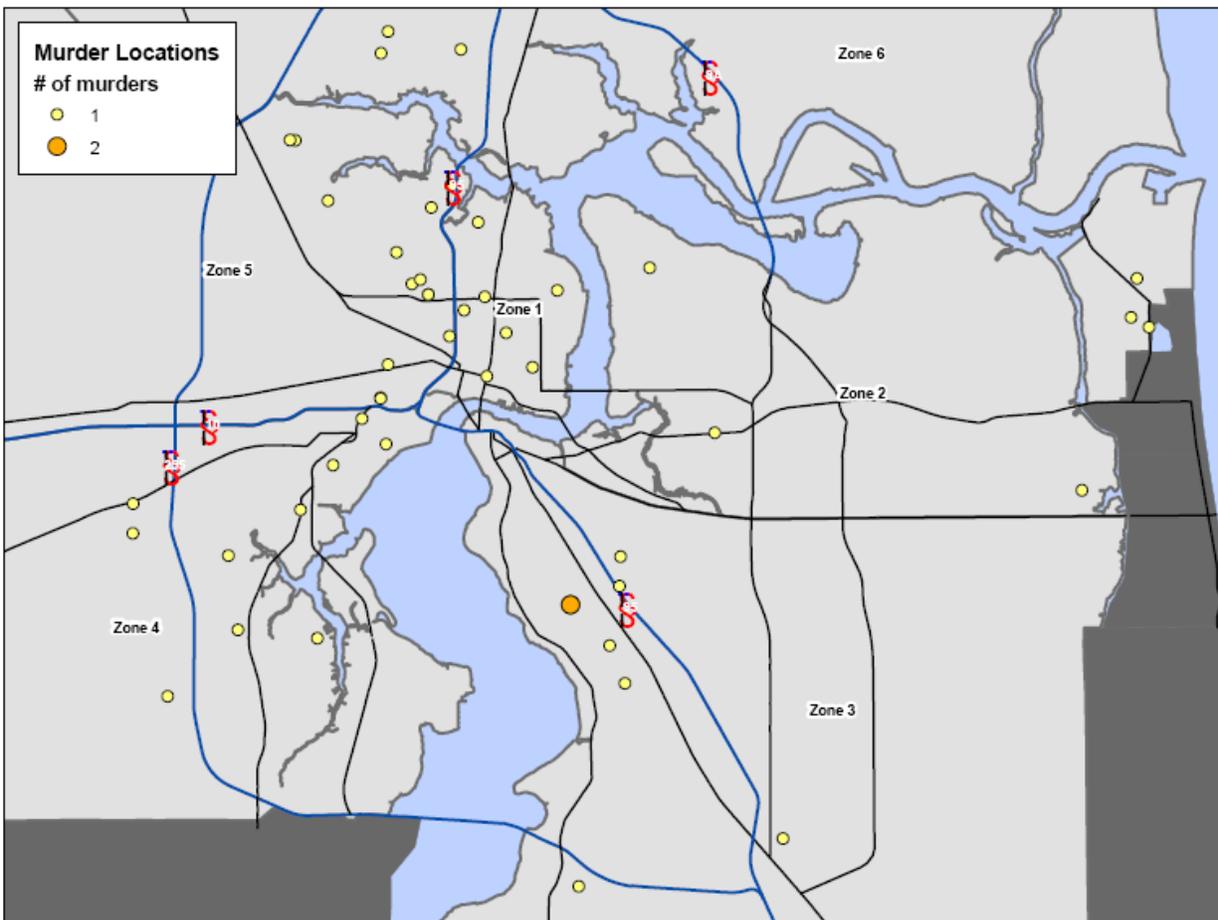


Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

The forty-eight (48) murders that occurred January 1 through April 30, 2006, are displayed on Map 2. Most of these murders occurred on the north and west sides of Jacksonville. Preliminary information on these cases indicates consistency with murders in prior years in the characteristics of victims, suspects (although only 17 suspects have been identified to date), circumstances, and the use of guns as the leading murder weapon.

Map 2

Murder Locations, 1/1/06 – 4/30/06



Source: Aggregated data, 1/1/06 - 4/30/06

Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

Date: May 2, 2006

Risk Factors for Violence and Murder

National research studies have established a recognized set of risk factors connected with murder. These risk factors appear in neighborhoods, families, and individuals. Such factors increase the risk for violent interpersonal behavior:

Neighborhood Risk Factors

- Concentration of poverty
- Unemployment and underemployment
- Low social capital (neighbors do not trust each other and are not willing to speak out or act when there are problems)
- Segregation of racial and ethnic groups
- Gender socialization (males adopt aggression, violence and other anti-social behaviors as proof of their masculinity)
- Lack of neighborhood organizations and access to social services
- Traditions (expectations of cultural groups, peers and others that lead to conflict and violent behavior)
- Illegal markets (drug, stolen property markets and prostitution represent large sources of crime)
- Concentration of family and individual risk factors

Family Risk Factors

- Family disorganization (characterized by conflict between and among family members, high divorce rates, poor parenting skills, and the lack of adequate parental supervision)
- Absence of positive male role models in the home (whether because of single parenting, divorce or incarceration)
- Poverty
- Mother's age, education level and employment status at the birth of her first child
- Access to weapons (especially handguns, the leading weapons used to commit murder)

Individual Risk Factors

- Access to weapons (especially handguns, the leading weapons used to commit murder)
- Mother's age, education level and employment status
- Mother's cigarette, alcohol or other drug use during pregnancy
- Unstable or poor parenting and the lack of adequate parental supervision
- Exposure as a child to violence, either as a victim or witness (or both), or through media (television, film, video games, or music lyrics)
- Low expectation of being caught and punished for inappropriate or criminal behavior
- Learned predisposition toward violence (violence is learned as an acceptable method of resolving conflict)
- Limited social relationships (social isolation of an individual from family, peers, and others); associating with delinquent peers
- Poor social/communication skills
- Physical punishment/abuse
- Poor school performance, high truancy, and dropping out of school before graduation
- Low achievement (formal education, job and life skills)
- Accumulated negative emotion (suppressed feelings and emotions may be released in a dangerous, spontaneous way)
- Diagnosis with a conduct disorder before age 10
- Residence in two or more family placements by age 10 (for foster children)
- Criminal activity, including selling illicit drugs

Risk Factors in Jacksonville

These complex and interrelated neighborhood, family, and individual risk factors influence the murder rate in Jacksonville. Economic, education and housing factors are among the most critical risks, and serious racial and geographic disparities persist in all three areas. Many risk factors co-exist within Jacksonville's densely-populated urban core and western zones, especially high poverty, lack of educational attainment, and single parent families. Poverty and racism are common denominators for hopelessness and frustration in these communities.

Jacksonville neighborhoods with the highest concentration of neighborhood risk factors (poverty, unemployment, racial segregation, and concentrations of family and individual risk factors) are also those with the highest concentrations of murders (compare Maps 1 and 2 with Maps 3, 4, and 5 in the report.)

In addition, available measures show that the family and individual risk factors for violence are prevalent in Jacksonville. High school dropout rates (5.9 percent in 2004-05) and rates of students who do not graduate (the graduation rate was 65.5 percent in 2004-05) point to large numbers of youth at risk in the community. The U.S. Census estimates that 13.2 percent of all Duval County residents lived below the poverty line in 2004. They further estimate 30,578 single mother-headed households with children, 30 percent of all households with children in Duval County. Other indicators of access to guns and behavioral risk factors similarly demonstrate a need for concern for their potential impacts on violence and murder in Jacksonville.

Underlying Problems to Address

The study committee found that persistent problems of unequal opportunity and treatment—both real and perceived—form the basis of many of the risk factors for violence and murder previously mentioned. These underlying issues lead to a myriad of problems and create conditions that are conducive to social discord and violence:

Racism

Jacksonville has been plagued for decades by individual and institutional racism that persists today and plays out in the most fundamental ways to create significant health, housing, education, and economic disparities. Racism leads to social mistrust and will hinder efforts to bring about the systemic changes necessary for long-term reduction of violent crime and murder in the community.

Alienation and Mistrust

Law enforcement efforts and mandatory sentencing have had a disproportionate impact on minority populations, making a compelling argument that minorities experience unequal treatment under the law. Perceptions of racism, profiling, and lack of fair treatment creates deep suspicion of police, social services, housing agencies, and the courts. These perceptions create unwillingness among minorities to work with police and prosecutors, impeding crime prevention and hindering efforts to identify, apprehend, try, and convict criminals.

Lack of Economic Security

Studies confirm the concentration of interpersonal violence in areas characterized by poverty, segregation of minority populations, and concentration of single-parent households. The lack of education, job skills training, and access to jobs lock many into inter-generational poverty and hopeless lives within acutely disadvantaged areas.

Chronic Stress

Social and psychological circumstances can cause long-term stress. Continuing anxiety, insecurity, low self-esteem, social isolation and lack of control over work and home life have powerful effects on health. Chronic stress makes people more vulnerable to a wide range of health-threatening conditions and aggression.

Lack of Positive Male Role Models

In many families where the father is absent due to single parenting, divorce, incarceration, or other reasons, boys are raised without competent male role models and they may incorporate caricatures of masculinity into their expectations for appropriate male behavior. The male norms they adopt may overly rely on violence, toughness, and intimidation, because the boys have not seen the kind, nurturing, and loving male to emulate. This is most evident in neighborhoods characterized by a high father/male absence in families.

Culture of Violence

Many cases of violence are reactions to attacks against reputation or status and reflect the tacit belief that violence is an appropriate response to such an affront. Violence begins with anger, intolerance, impatience, unfair judgments and aggression. It is often reflected in vulgar language, violent entertainment, and unhealthy competitive behavior. These acts and attitudes create a cultural climate where violence prospers.

The United States faces far higher rates of murder, assault, rape and other violent crimes than other societies. Violence in Jacksonville's culture is fed by multiple forces—the disintegration of family life, media influences, growing substance abuse, the availability of weapons, and the rise

of gangs and increasing youth violence. Violence in American culture is often exaggerated and even celebrated in the entertainment media.

Hopelessness

Many children grow up surrounded by violence in their neighborhoods and do not see a long life expectancy for themselves. Some grow up isolated and alienated from the larger community by a cultural divide that cannot be crossed. Their anger, combined with lack of direction, opportunities, and skills, provides a breeding ground for violence and creates a cycle of hopelessness that may be transmitted to each succeeding generation.

Resource Allocation

Limited financial and human resources are available to combat violence, murder, and other crimes. It is more cost effective to prevent crime than to involve law enforcement, the court system, and corrections in crime intervention measures and rehabilitation. Even so, far greater resources currently are directed toward intervention than prevention.

Continued efforts are needed in all three areas—prevention, intervention and rehabilitation. Adequate resources are needed to support law enforcement, the court system, the parole and probation system, and the myriad programs that work to make the community safe. Some local programs that have proven effective in reducing violence and murder in Jacksonville have experienced funding cuts in recent years and face further reductions in 2006.

Felony Sentencing

While offenders merit punishment, one problem is that the consequences of a felony conviction often reach well beyond completion of the prison term. Regardless of the nature of the crime, people with felony records are permanently barred from employment in the banking industry and jobs requiring certain forms of licensure. Most employers are unwilling to hire convicted felons, regardless of the crime committed or any inequity of laws under which they were convicted. The restrictions of a felony record make the difficult community re-entry process even more challenging for ex-offenders. Ex-felons lose their right to vote, may not live in public housing, and may not receive food stamps.

Judicial responses to crime can also be inappropriate in relationship to the gravity of the crimes committed. Many crimes are labeled as felonies that may be inappropriately classified, leading to long sentencing and undue burdens on ex-offenders for re-entry into society. The judicial system needs greater discretion in dealing with people accused of criminal activity. Appropriate distinctions need to be made between felonies and misdemeanors and between violent and non-violent crimes.

Compounding Factors

Certain activities are linked to a higher potential for certain types of murder. Some links are obvious, such as those between domestic violence and murder or illegal drugs and murder. Together, domestic violence and illegal drugs were associated with at least 34 percent of murders in Jacksonville from 2000 through 2005. Other factors, such as child victimization or the witnessing of violence by a child, are more subtle and may take years to manifest themselves in criminal activity or violence. All violent behavior is much more likely to result in death if a gun is involved. These compounding factors—illicit drugs, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, and guns—and their connections to murder and violence are examined in this section.

The study committee followed a health model approach in its review of the community's response to the factors that influence violent crime and murder. It considered prevention measures that reduce the risk for violence, early intervention techniques that disrupt pre- or

early criminal behaviors, and rehabilitation efforts for individuals and systems that break the cycle of violence and prevent murder. Prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation measures are discussed for the compounding factors.

Illegal Drugs

Each component of the illicit drug trade in Jacksonville—trafficking, sales, and use—is associated with violence and murder in Jacksonville. Close to one-half of the murders committed in Jacksonville during the past five years were tied in some way to illicit drugs, according to JSO estimates. JSO identified 19 percent of murders committed between 2000 and 2005 as directly related to illicit drugs. JSO further estimated that a high proportion of murders attributed to arguments and robbery (39 percent combined) were also drug-associated.

Do drugs cause crime, or is it the addict's desire for drugs that drives crime? The committee heard that both statements are true, and that the potential for violence exists among individuals at each level of the drug market hierarchy from the small user to the international supplier. For example, some drug users experience physical and mental changes that increase aggression and lead to violent behavior. Also, some users commit crimes—burglary and robbery—in order to support their habits. Street drug deals gone bad and competition for “turf” or territory among dealers may spark violence or murder. Finally, there is fierce competition at the top rung of the drug market ladder where rival drug suppliers compete for dominance in a multi-billion dollar international industry.

A resource person noted two significant recent changes in Jacksonville's illicit drug market. First, cocaine trafficking routes have shifted, and now Jacksonville is part of two major distribution networks, one that originates in Mexico, the other in Jamaica. As a result, large quantity shipments regularly enter Jacksonville, which was not the case five years ago. Cocaine seizures totaled 137 kilograms in 2005; 100 kilograms were seized during the first 5 months alone of 2006. Second, a growing number of methamphetamine manufacturing labs are being discovered in Duval County. This highly addictive substance and its lucrative marketing business have caused West Coast communities' murder rates to skyrocket. The committee was warned to prepare for “meth”-related violence and murder.

Illegal Drugs: Prevention

The concerted drug use prevention efforts of national, state and local government agencies and community organizations are credited with declining national rates of drug use among youth. Reductions in alcohol, tobacco and other drug use among Florida students shown by the 2005 *Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey (FYSAS)* fit into a longer-term pattern of declining drug use at both state and national levels. There appears to be a real shift in the behaviors of Florida students whose past-30-day alcohol or any illicit drug use declined from 38.2 percent in 2000 to 34 percent in 2005.

Drug use differs by gender and across ethnic groups. Males have historically used illicit drugs at higher rates than females, but the drug use gender gap has closed in recent years, mostly as a result of declines in use by males. White, non-Hispanic students report higher rates of use among most drug types, followed by Hispanic and African American students.

The Keep Kids Drug Free Foundation, Inc. (KKDF) was created by Florida non-profit, community-based drug prevention and treatment agencies. The Foundation's Resource Prevention Centers (RPC) operate throughout the state to provide training, technical assistance and statewide coordination of prevention efforts. The Northeast Florida RPC operates through Gateway Community Services and serves Duval and surrounding counties. The Center collaborates with business, public schools, WorkSource, Naval Air Station Jacksonville, the Duval County jail, and faith-based organizations to fulfill regional prevention needs. It coordinates and supports local prevention initiatives such as: “Keeping It Real” Drug Resistance

Program; Red Ribbon Week; MAD DADS' "I Took The Pledge;" September Recovery Month; The Bullying Program; and a variety of other programs.

Drug use prevention programs (*Say No to Drugs*), anti-drug media campaigns (Florida's anti-smoking *Truth Campaign* and Montana's campaign against methamphetamine), and a variety of school-based programs teach youth skills to avoid involvement in drugs, gangs, and violence with varying degrees of success.

Illegal Drugs: Intervention

The majority of Duval County inmates jailed under a high profile felony charge committed a drug crime. According to JSO, 6,172 persons were jailed under 8,188 felony drug charges in 2005. By comparison, the second highest category of felony charges for which persons were jailed was driver's license violations (1,700), followed by burglary (1,187), domestic violence (786), and robbery (382).

Drug-related crime consumes significant amounts of law enforcement, court, and corrections resources as offenders move through a cycle of arrest, prosecution, serving time, release and, often, re-arrest. It taxes an overburdened criminal court system and the capacity of the parole and probation system to handle growing caseloads. To interrupt this cycle, cases of persons arrested for offenses involving the purchase of drugs, possession of drugs, and non-violent felonies which are clearly drug-related can be diverted locally to either the Pre-Trial Intervention Program or the Drug Court. Defendants who pass a rigorous screening process and are accepted into these programs are required to undergo alcohol and/or drug treatment and rehabilitation. The State Attorney may dismiss the original charges of those individuals who successfully complete a diversion program. The cases of those who fail to satisfy program requirements are returned to the prosecutor for appropriate legal action.

In 2005, the local State Attorney's Office opened 11,337 new cases for drug offenses, including both misdemeanor and felony offenses. A small number of those cases, 559 (five percent), were referred to Adult Drug Court, and 102 persons signed into the program. Others who did not meet program criteria were rejected or re-diverted to other programs. A total of 59 persons graduated from the program in 2005. Clearly, the Drug Court option is only being used for a small proportion of non-violent drug offenders in Jacksonville.

The effectiveness of the Drug Court was lauded by several speakers; program graduates in years 2001-2004 had a seven percent recidivism rate on drug charges. However, the program lost funding for several months in 2005 and its future funding is not guaranteed.

The majority of drug offenders are not diverted to treatment programs. They face trial and sentencing guidelines that are inconsistent and disparately impact minority groups, especially for offenses involving crack cocaine. For example, crack is inexpensive and usually sold in small quantities openly where police may observe and apprehend users and street dealers. The more expensive powder cocaine is also distributed on the streets, but is more often sold behind closed doors, hidden from view. This difference results in the arrest of a disproportionate number of African American crack cocaine users and street dealers.

Such arrests are further compounded by two federal sentencing laws passed in the 1980s that created mandatory minimum sentences for trafficking and simple possession of crack cocaine. Crack users and dealers receive much harsher penalties than users and dealers of powder cocaine. For example, a person convicted in federal court of possession of 5 grams of crack automatically receives a minimum mandatory 5 year prison term and a felony criminal record, while a person convicted of possessing 5 grams of powder cocaine may receive a probation sentence. The laws create massive sentencing disparities by race, with African Americans receiving longer sentences for their crack cocaine use than the mostly White and Hispanic powder cocaine offenders.

Many convicted users and small-time sellers will spend 10 to 15 years in prison and earn felony criminal records for non-violent drug offenses involving crack cocaine. (An average incarceration cost of \$250,000 is estimated for each of those lengthy imprisonments.) A resource speaker informed the committee that research has shown that placing young men in jail with violent criminals serves to strengthen their violent world view and leads to both increased risk of future incarceration and increased violence and murder.

The sentencing inequity leads to perceptions of unfairness and mistrust of the court system and may contribute to the sense of hopelessness among ex-offenders and the community. Sentencing guidelines should be reviewed as well as the forfeiture of civil rights imposed on all felons regardless of offense.

Illegal Drugs: Rehabilitation

The United States treats drug addiction as a law enforcement issue and responds to the drug problem with arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment. Many other countries view drug addiction as an illness and respond with rehabilitation and treatment. Those who see rehabilitation as the only solution to the drug problem believe a law enforcement-based war against drugs cannot be won.

Several resource speakers agreed with the view that comprehensive treatment should be provided when drug use prevention measures fail. Drug treatment on demand, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, was recommended to meet Jacksonville's need for rehabilitative services.

The 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that an estimated 8.1 million Americans, 3.3 percent of the population, needed treatment for an illicit drug use problem in 2004. Of this number, an estimated 6.6 million persons, 81 percent of those needing services, did not receive treatment at a specialty facility.

Based on these national figures, an estimated 26,000 drug addicts resided in Duval County in 2004. The committee heard that most individuals who are arrested with drug charges do not want drug treatment because drugs provide a small bit of pleasure in their hopeless lives. It is only when addicts hit bottom that reality sets in and some realize that, without treatment, they will lose everything or die. This is why it is so important to have treatment available when addicts are ready to accept it.

Local drug treatment options are limited for addicts when they are ready to accept treatment. An addict searching Jacksonville's telephone directory Yellow Pages for help will find thirty-two service providers in Jacksonville that provide a variety of treatment programs (e.g., short-term and long-term, in-patient and out-patient treatment, counseling and group therapy, etc.) Other treatment programs may be offered in the community but are less visible. Only six of those listed offer in-patient residential treatment and rehabilitation services, and four of the six accept only private pay clients who can afford the estimated \$50,000 bill for in-patient treatment. The remaining two providers, Gateway Community Services and River Region Human Services, accept private insurance and Medicare/Medicaid payments for in-and out-patient rehabilitation services. Together, Gateway and River Region offer 76 residential treatment beds, and both facilities maintain lengthy waiting lists for assessment and in- and out-patient treatment. Twenty detoxification beds are available now, a number down significantly from the 55 that were available nine years ago. In Jacksonville, the demand for drug treatment greatly exceeds the available supply.

Past and anticipated funding cuts push providers to find innovative ways to meet the demand for treatment services. Gateway Community Services found it was able to treat additional out-patient clients by unbundling their residential services package. However, this piecemeal

treatment approach may prove less effective than residential treatment. Another innovative approach to spreading services may be to offer them to clients over the phone or via the Internet.

Following treatment, many newly clean and sober individuals require on-going support with housing, securing employment, and clearing up past problems to avoid returning to their former situations and resuming drug use. Gateway offers transitional housing to recovering addicts for up to two years in seven studio apartments.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is viewed by some as the root of all interpersonal violence. This is where it all begins, they say, within the family, inside the privacy of the home. Understanding violence in the community begins first by understanding violence within the family.

Much aggression in males and females is a learned behavior, but aggression can also be unlearned. Domestic violence is an outcome of many problems—a control issue between two individuals, aggression, inability to manage anger, or a response to antagonism.

Florida statutes define domestic violence as “any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, or any criminal offense resulting in personal injury or death of one family or household member by another, who is or was residing in the same single dwelling unit.” By family or household member, the statute refers to spouse, former spouse, persons related by blood or marriage, persons who have lived together as a family, and persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they have been married or have resided together at any time.

Every year in the United States, between 1,000 and 1,600 women die at the hands of their male partners. Women are the victims in most cases of domestic violence, but men too are murdered by their intimate partners and family members, though in much smaller numbers. The Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office documents approximately 8,500 cases of domestic violence annually. Eighty-one (81) murder victims, 15 percent of the 543 persons murdered 2000 through 2005, were direct victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence murders often occur after a long, escalating pattern of battering that is known to law enforcement or others.

Studies have not found a difference in the occurrence of abusive relationships between wealthy and poor households. However, poverty is a stress factor that may increase the frequency of domestic violence in violent homes. Without intervention, abuse is likely to continue even after a stress factor like poverty is removed. Poor households are less likely than affluent ones to have the resources to seek help, such as private marriage counseling, in an effort to resolve domestic problems.

More domestic violence reports originate from low income areas than high income ones. Because homes are close together in poorer areas, neighbors may become aware of violence and report it. A high level of police presence in low income/high crime areas also increases the detection of domestic violence and intervention by law enforcement officers. In more affluent neighborhoods where houses are farther apart, neighbors are less likely to witness and report violence occurring in neighboring homes.

Domestic violence murder crosses all economic and racial lines. The Duval County 2004 Domestic Mortality Review Report reported the following statistics about domestic violence homicides that occurred between December 1996 and December 2004:

- Racial demographics of those who killed closely mirrored the makeup of Duval County (According to U.S. Census Bureau 2004 estimates, Duval County’s population is 64 percent White, 29 percent Black or African American, and 7 percent of the population is of another race or combination of races.);

- 80 percent of the domestic homicides involved persons who had been intimate (sexual) partners;
- In 26 percent of the intimate homicides, the couple had already separated;
- An abused woman's chance of being killed by her abuser increases five-fold in the period between her leaving the abuser and the issuance of the final divorce order, and
- Guns were used to commit 54 percent of these domestic murders.

Domestic Violence: Prevention

The local response to domestic violence cases was praised as better than in most of the rest of the state. The Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP), Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (INVEST), and the Mayor's Task Force on Domestic Violence involve the Offices of the Sheriff and State Attorney, the courts, military, Hubbard House (a shelter for battered women), and government in prevention, intervention and rehabilitation activities.

When the number of domestic violence incidence reports in Jacksonville topped 9,000 in 1997, and related murders jumped from 10 in 1997 to 19 in 1999, the City of Jacksonville responded with the creation of the *Intimate Violence Enhanced Services Team (INVEST)*. This collaborative initiative of agencies deals with the most serious cases of domestic violence. It conducts threat assessment reviews on all domestic violence police reports, proactively offers victim services and compliance oversight of abusers in the most dangerous cases, and formulates recommendations to reduce domestic violence murders.

Domestic Violence: Intervention

JSO received 7,878 reports of domestic violence in 2005, a level of reporting that has held fairly steady since 2001. The INVEST Team's review of these police reports identified 662 persons with high potential for murder. Of this number, 38 percent (249) of high-risk victims accepted assistance. Victims of domestic violence may decline help for many reasons: some believe the violence will stop and do not want to end the relationship; some fear retribution and possible harm to the children; and others are financially dependent upon the abuser and either cannot or will not leave. Also, INVEST case workers are not able to locate all high-risk victims in the days following the reported incident to offer help—some victims relocate and others can't be found because contact information was listed incorrectly on the police report.

The number of victims served by INVEST has declined in recent years, a trend tied directly to funding cuts and staff reductions that limit victim contact and recruitment. The INVEST program served 1,030 high-risk clients in 2003, 474 in 2004, and 249 in 2005. The effectiveness of INVEST's operations is reflected in the 37 percent reduction in domestic violence murders since the program's inception. In spite of its success, INVEST faces major funding cuts as of September 30, 2006.

The *Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP)* has met monthly since 1988 to address issues, make recommendations and implement changes in civil and criminal systems to reduce domestic violence. The DVIP Mortality Committee analyzes domestic violence murders annually and issues a report each year that contains recommendations for improvement. Representatives from the Sheriff's Office, State Attorney's Office, Clerk's Office, judiciary, Hubbard House, the Batterers' Intervention Programs, military and City of Jacksonville comprise the group.

The *Center for the Prevention of Domestic Violence* grew out of a task force recommendation to simplify the process for domestic violence victims to obtain an injunction for protection. (Injunctions for protection, also known as restraining orders, work only if the abuser cares about the consequences he or she faces if the order is violated.) The Center's victim advocates are now part of the court process and help petitioners with lethality assessment, safety planning, and referrals. This intervention increases safety for petitioners. Current funding for the Center ends September 30, 2006.

A resource person observed that a dedicated domestic violence court, in which an assigned judge presides over all court proceedings related to a family, would improve the safety of domestic violence victims. A single judge would be better able to assess and continually monitor the seriousness and potential lethality of the family situation. This arrangement may also improve consistency in judicial decisions. However, not all resource speakers agreed with this approach because it may not be an effective use of judicial resources.

Specialized judicial training in domestic violence is used in other states to educate judges about special issues such as economic security and child custody that affect the victim's decision to remain in or leave a dangerous situation.

Some domestic violence courts use "restorative justice" programs that bring the parties together to explore what went wrong with their relationship and find solutions. This mediation-type arrangement often does not work when the parties have an unequal power basis, as is often true in troubled domestic relationships.

Domestic Violence: Rehabilitation

Batterer's intervention programs (BIP) are the community's most effective rehabilitation method of changing perpetrators' behavior. In Jacksonville, Hubbard House and Salvation Army operate state-certified programs for batterers. Hubbard House's *First Step Program for Batterers* teaches nonviolent communication skills and accountability. The victims' partners receive support group and individual counseling and safety checks.

The study committee learned that the misdemeanor courts ordered 1,323 people in 2003, 1,329 people in 2004, and 1,157 persons in 2005 to either Hubbard House's First Step Program for Batterers, or the Salvation Army's BIP.

Individual success in rehabilitation is dependent upon program completion, and 55 percent of First Step participants complete the program. This rate exceeds the State average for completion of batterer's intervention programs. Eighty-eight percent of men completing First Step's 24-week program were not re-arrested for another domestic violence crime for at least 3 years.

When batterers fail to complete an intervention program, do not comply with terms of a protective order, or otherwise disobey court orders, the assessment of penalties by the courts is inconsistent. This lack of consistency in the courts makes rehabilitation of a batterer more difficult.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Acts of child abuse (defined as any act or failure to act that endangers a child's physical or emotional health and development, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse) and neglect (defined as the parent's failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, protection, and medical attention) often perpetuate a cycle of violence for many of its victims, and the impact of abuse and neglect is widespread and costly.

Reports of child abuse and neglect have been on the rise nationally since 1993, even as other forms of violent crimes continue to decrease dramatically. A higher percentage of reports are verified as actual abuse or neglect by investigation than has been the case in the past. The Florida Department of Children and Families verified child abuse and neglect reports in Duval County at a rate of 8.6 per 1,000 children under 18 during 2005.

According to the State Child Abuse Death Review Team, 17 Duval County children died from verified child abuse or neglect in 2004; that number fell to 9 in 2005, but is on the rise in 2006. These homicides include accidental or unintended deaths of children from: drowning or drug

overdose while the parent was absent; smothering or being or crushed while co-sleeping with parents; or the mother's prenatal drug use.

Few murders in Duval County are attributed to child abuse or neglect; JSO reports two child abuse murders in the years 2000 through 2005. Not all murders of children may be recognized among the homicides, however, because deaths thought to be "accidental" are not investigated. Some "accidental" deaths may, in fact, be murders.

Aside from physical and emotional injuries sustained, child abuse has long-term economic consequences beyond the immediate costs associated with law enforcement, the child welfare system, health and mental health care, and the court system. These costs sometimes include juvenile and adult criminal activity, mental illness, substance abuse, and domestic violence. Child abuse and neglect may also result in loss of productivity due to unemployment and underemployment later in the victim's life.

Childhood abuse or neglect increases the risk of being arrested for violent crime, whether in the juvenile or adult years, as well as for crime in general. Studies show that:

- Abuse and neglect increased the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 59 percent, as an adult by 28 percent, and for a violent crime by 30 percent.
- Neglected children were younger at first arrest, committed nearly twice as many offenses, and were arrested more frequently than children who were not abused or neglected. This early onset of criminal behavior is associated with increased variety, seriousness, and duration of problems.
- Unemployment and underemployment disproportionately affect abused and neglected individuals. They are more likely than their non-abused counterparts to hold menial and semiskilled jobs.

Child Abuse and Neglect: Prevention

The Neighborhood Partnership, a program of the First Coast Family Center, has collaborated with community partners since 2000 to create formal and informal associations to reduce child abuse and neglect in Jacksonville. A Neighborhood Partnership-sponsored abuse prevention task force is working now to develop family-strengthening programs.

The *Healthy Families Program* sponsored by the Jacksonville Children's Commission (JCC) is a home-visitation program designed to promote children's health and prevent child abuse and neglect. This program targets and serves high risk families—single and teen mothers and families living in high poverty—with pre- and post-natal care. Almost 1,000 families were served in 2005.

Child Abuse and Neglect: Intervention

When prevention measures fail and children cannot safely stay with their families, the State of Florida removes abused or neglected children from their homes and places them in the foster care system. There is value when the first placement works and the family is reunited. There are diminishing returns for children who must be moved to a second or third placement. Children who experience multiple placements at an early age face increased risk for violent behavior. With the cost of foster care ranging between \$60,000 and \$80,000 per child per year, child abuse prevention is an attractive, cost-effective alternative to foster care.

Guns

The committee heard from resource speakers that low-cost guns were readily available for purchase on the streets of Jacksonville to anyone, even juveniles. Resource speakers spoke of guns being available on the street for as little as \$40. Guns dramatically increase the likelihood that a violent attack will result in serious injury or death. A gun is the weapon used more than any other to commit murder in Jacksonville; knives were second to guns. Firearms were used

to kill 67 percent (364 of 543) of Jacksonville's murder victims between January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2005; knives were used to commit 10 percent, or 54 of the murders. Of the murders committed January 1 through April 30, 2006, 71 percent (34 of 48) of the victims died of gunshot wounds.

Gunshot victims who survive long enough to be transported to the hospital are more likely to die of their wounds than are victims of knife assaults. In 2004, Florida hospitals reported that 19.6 percent of gunshot victim patients died in the hospital. In comparison, the death rate for cuts or piercing injuries (which would include knife wounds) was much lower at 2.5 percent. The death rate of victims of assaults who had been struck or were struck against something was 2.8 percent.

Youth gun violence has become a self-sustaining cycle in numerous cities with many of today's offenders becoming tomorrow's victims. When youth are at risk of armed confrontation, they tend to seek protection by carrying and using guns and forming small, informal groups or gangs. Minor confrontations escalate quickly to violence and murder when guns are present. The 2004 Duval County Youth Substance Abuse Survey, which asked Duval County Public School students about substance use and other problem behaviors, found that 5.3 percent of high school students and 4.7 percent of middle school students reported carrying a handgun in the past year, with male students (8.8 percent) more likely to have reported carrying a gun than female students (2.0 percent.) Male students also were more likely to report taking a gun to school (2.0 percent) in the past year than female students (0.1 percent). These answers translate into 3,300 youth reporting carrying a handgun in the past year, with 660 taking guns to school.

Guns: Intervention

Charleston, South Carolina, uses a gun bounty program to confiscate guns possessed or used illegally. Charleston's program relies on quick police follow-up to gun tips; bounties or rewards are paid to informants who can remain anonymous.

The gun bounty program differs from a gun buy-back program, which offers cash incentives for people to turn in their guns. Research demonstrates that gun buy-back programs generally do not impact gun-related crimes. Instead, the gun bounty program targets those guns that are most likely to be used illegally. In addition, the gun bounty program is designed to discourage carrying or "flashing" illegal firearms, as anyone could anonymously report seeing the gun and receive a reward. Charleston Chief of Police Reuben Greenberg credited the gun bounty program in particular with eliminating their problem of guns being brought to school.

The Charleston program was instituted in May of 1994. By 1999, criminal firearm incidents in Charleston County had fallen by 34 percent, compared to a statewide decline during the same time period of 14 percent.

What's Being Done in Jacksonville

Many resource speakers felt the community's murder-reduction strategies should emphasize prevention. Prevention is less costly and more effective than intervention, punishment and rehabilitation; the total savings of diverting one child from a lifetime of crime is estimated at about \$1.5 million. The threat of punishment does not appear to act as a deterrent to violence and murder in Jacksonville. Duval County has the highest murder rate in the state in spite of having more death penalty cases than the rest of the state.

Many strategies are already in place to address risk factors for violence and murder. The committee was unable to explore all current programs due to the limited timeframe of this study. However, examples of prominent and effective strategies are discussed in the following sections.

Efforts to Strengthen and Support Families and Children

Children need strong families and other caring adults to nurture and support them and to serve as positive role models. Children need a safe, secure environment at home, at school, and after school. They need a quality education and economic opportunity to become self-sufficient. Children who enjoy these benefits are more likely to succeed in life and less likely to engage in criminal behavior than those who do not.

The committee heard from numerous speakers about the lack of positive male role models in the lives of male youth and the terrible consequences that result. Without guidance on how to grow from a boy into a man, many youth adopt negative and anti-social attitudes and risky behaviors from media and their peers that lead them to crime, violence, and murder.

Providing Comprehensive Family Services

The *Healthy Families Program* sponsored by the Jacksonville Children's Commission (JCC) is a home-visitation program designed to promote children's health. This program served almost 1,000 high risk families in 2005.

Full Service Schools is a neighborhood-governed educational and social service collaboration designed to meet the health and psycho-social needs of academically at-risk students. The program offers one-stop access for many health, education, and social service programs. Neighborhood locations are chosen based on determined need such as incidence of free/reduced lunch, number of child abuse reports, or prevalence of juvenile crime. Services are delivered to students and families at their school, in their neighborhood, or in their homes. Full Service Schools served 26,684 children during the 2005-06 school year.

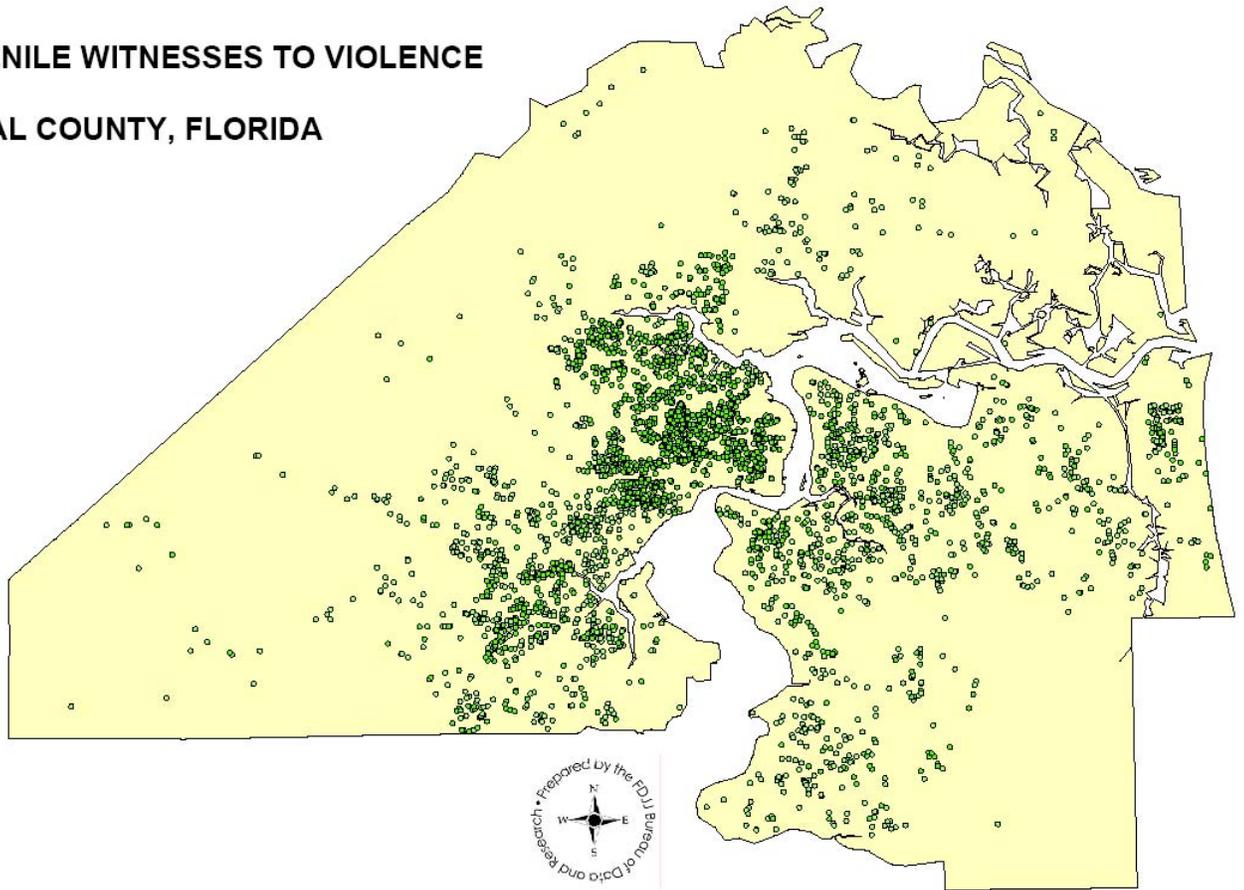
Assisting Child Witnesses to Violence

Children who witness violence and find themselves in violent circumstances are at risk of becoming violent themselves. JSO reports approximately 4,000 children as witnesses to violence each year. Many crimes and acts of violence go unreported to police, so the actual number of child witnesses could be significantly higher than the reported figure. Juvenile exposure to violence increases the likelihood of reenactment. A correlation between juveniles witnessing violence and their later involvement in crime was established through local research conducted by Dr. Michael Hallett of the University of North Florida. Analysis of over 10,000 JSO crime reports made between 1995 and 2003 revealed that 22 percent of Jacksonville children who witnessed 1-2 acts of violence were subsequently arrested as juveniles. That percentage rose to 43.3 percent when children witnessed 3 or more acts of violence. In the general population, only 0.06 percent of children are arrested as juveniles. The locations where children witnessed violence are displayed in Map 3.

Map 3

Juvenile Witness to Violence 1995 - 2002

JUVENILE WITNESSES TO VIOLENCE DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA



Source: Dr. Michael Hallett, University of North Florida

Hubbard House developed the *HARK (Helping At Risk Kids)* program at the request of the State Attorney's Office to intervene on behalf of children ages 3-17 who witness or experience violence. The 12-week program features individual assessment and counseling, parental involvement, educational and support groups, and case management. HARK works to break the generational cycle of violent behavior by teaching children that domestic violence is not their fault and is not acceptable. Special support groups are convened for youth ages 12-17 who have continued the cycle of violence and find themselves in the State Attorney's first offenders program or the Pre-Trial Detention Facility.

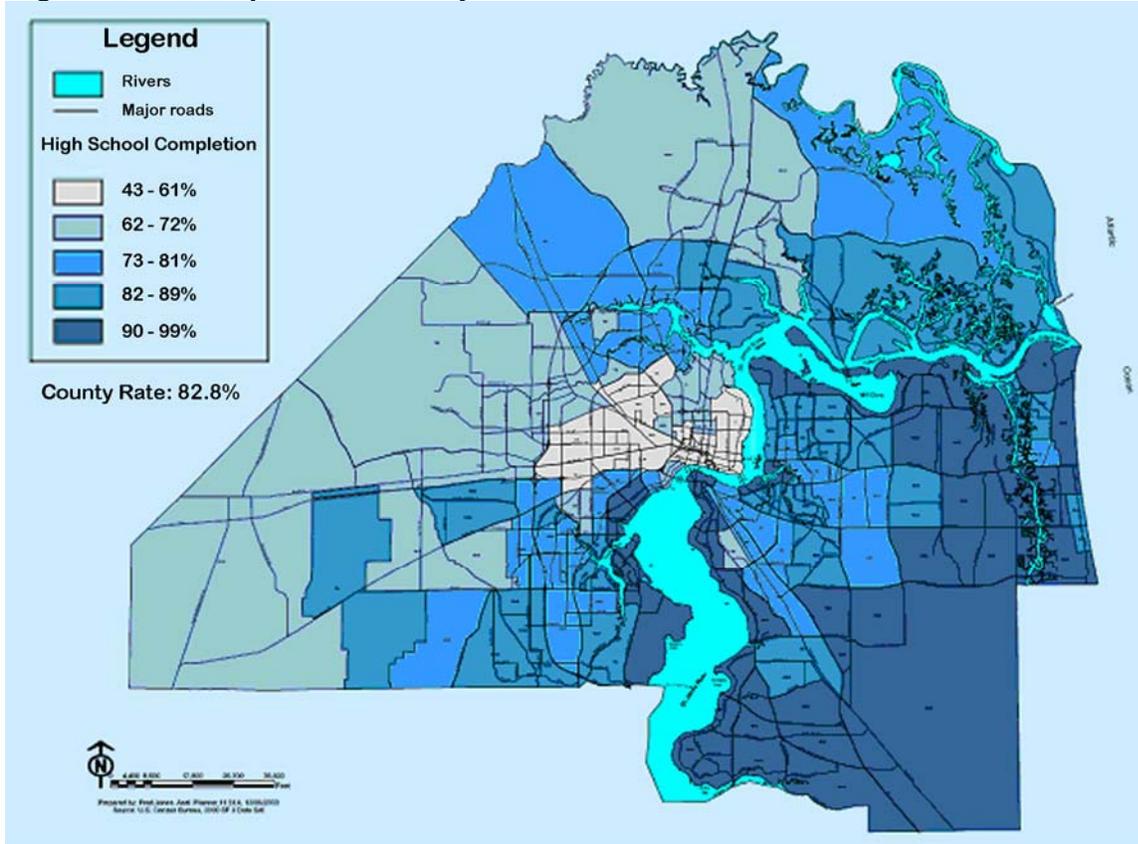
Relatively few of the thousands of Duval County children who witness violence each year, about 400, are served through HARK. Only 2 of the 20 children who witnessed a homicide in 2005 received counseling and assistance through HARK.

School-Based Efforts

Quality education often serves as a deterrent to crime. Violent criminals often have low education levels and low literacy rates. Some estimates report as many as 80 percent of all prisoner inmates are high school dropouts. The Duval County School District (DCSD) experienced a high school dropout rate of 5.9 percent and a graduation rate of 65.5 percent during the 2004-05 school year. Duval County high school graduates are displayed on Map 4.

Map 4

High School Completion Rates by Census Tract, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

While the State of Florida mandates health and character education, the committee learned that the mandate is not enforced. As the district and state focus more attention and resources on compliance with federal *No Child Left Behind* requirements and meeting Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) performance standards, math and reading courses will continue to replace other curricula, especially non-academic subjects including art, music, health and character education.

In addition to teaching academics, the community expects schools to promote character development and teach students important life skills such as non-violent conflict resolution and the avoidance of risky behaviors, including drug use. Character education is taught to middle and high school students through *Connect with Kids* and to elementary school students through *Learning for Life* and a district-developed curriculum that infuses character into the core curricula through reading. *Lessons in Character* is another Character Education program used. The District works closely with the national Character Counts program to deliver a consistent character message throughout the community.

Drug use and other risky behaviors are topics addressed through the Comprehensive Health Education curriculum, which is required coursework for students in grades K-9 and grade 11. The course includes knowledge and skills acquisition in a variety of topic areas relating to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs and violence prevention.

The District operates several prevention and counseling programs: ZIP (Zeroing in on Prevention), Foundations/CHAMPs, and the Night-time Substance Use Prevention Counseling Education Program. Student Options for Success (SOS) is another alternative program that is

available for those students who commit multiple, serious violations against the Code of Student Conduct.

Professional school guidance counselors are assigned to each Duval County public school. They are in a position to work with at-risk or disruptive students and link them to appropriate school and community resources. During the 2004-05 school year, 252 counselors served approximately 125,500 Duval County Public School students as follows:

Table 3

School Guidance Counselors, Duval County Public Schools, 2005

School	Number of Counselors	Counselor to Student Ratio
Elementary	103	1:670
Middle	62	1:522
High	75	1:485
Special	11	1:141
Charter	1	1:1,043

Source: Duval County Public Schools, 2006

School district priorities for allocating funds are cited as the reason for the low levels of counseling services provided to students.

Discipline and parental involvement are important for success in school. The maintenance of order and safety in the classroom and on school property is the shared responsibility of students and parents, classroom teachers, counselors, and school administrators. Duval County Public School (DCPS) students are required to comply with the district's Student Code of Conduct that defines acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Students may be suspended or expelled from school for serious code violations. Out-of-school suspension may not be an effective disciplinary tool, especially for students who are left unsupervised in the community, missing needed classroom and study time.

DCPS and JSO partnered in 1990 to develop and operate the school resource officer (SRO) program that uses uniformed officers assigned to schools to deter violence and misconduct and lower student truancy. In 2005, the program placed 49 SROs in the district's 48 secondary schools (middle, high, and alternative schools).

After-school Programs

According to local, state and national research, youth are most likely to get into trouble or become victims of crime between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Structured after-school programs provide a safe, supervised environment during that period. They are critical to the well-being of many children who do not have a safe place to go at the end of the school day. Beyond providing a safe haven, after-school programming may enrich students' lives through exposure to the arts, sports or other extra-curricular pursuits.

The Jacksonville Children's Commission (JCC) funds fifty-four (54) mentoring and tutoring programs that serve over 8,000 children. A recent study concluded that students enrolled in these programs had better school attendance, grades, behavior and social skills than children not enrolled. Over 90 percent of the youth enrolled in JCC-supported mentoring and tutoring programs remained in school, achieved passing grades, and were not arrested over the 12 month study period.

Subsidized programs are especially important to low-income families who face financial barriers to child care. There is a tremendous need for after-school programs in Jacksonville where over 70 percent of mothers of minor children work outside of the home. A gap analysis of local programs studied the difference between community need and services provided. It found that only 19-20 percent of the children who need after-school programs are being served.

The Bridge of Northeast Florida, Tots 'N Teens Theatre, and the Police Athletic League (PAL) were cited by resource speakers as "best practice" examples of high quality, after-school programs serving at-risk children:

The Bridge of Northeast Florida is a comprehensive after-school program for children and youth between the ages of 5 and 18. It was established in 1983 with the goal of reducing teen pregnancy in the Springfield area. The program accomplished its goal and The Bridge continues to provide educational programs, healthy meals, and a safe place for children to gather after school. Through partnerships with a variety of agencies, The Bridge also links clients to career skills training, employment placement and medical services. Children and youth who attend the after-school programs two to three times a week attend school more often and tend to get in less trouble than those who attend less often.

Tots 'N" Teens Theatre, Inc., founded in 1985 as the African American Multidisciplinary Cultural Arts Center for Inner-City for At-risk Children and Youth, serves youth ages 3 to 19 and their families. The community-based organization focuses on the total child, combining education and the arts with the delivery of human services and other related programs. TNT was founded on the belief that exposure to the arts improves the quality of life and increases the motivation of the young to excel. Such exposure offsets juvenile delinquency, crime, truancy, drug use, and teenage pregnancy in inner-city neighborhoods.

TNT has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Lab as "a dynamic idea enriching the lives of African American children."

TNT currently operates several history-based theatre programs—*Heritage*, *Preserving the James Weldon Johnson Legacy*, and *Inspiring Young Minds*. Its after-school, school holiday, and weekend programs, however, were closed due to loss of funding.

Police Athletic League (PAL). Touted as JSO's best crime prevention activity, this sports-based program offers after-school programs, tutoring, test preparation, and mentoring to students through age 14. PAL served over 2,300 children last year, including 350 who participated in the after-school programs. The PAL program provides safe, structured activities for children, and its positive effects are felt in the surrounding neighborhoods. Violent crime dropped 33 percent within a 1,000 foot radius of Mallison Park after PAL revitalized the park and community center and began its operations there.

Mentoring Initiatives

Several resource speakers explained the importance of positive role models in the lives of children. Especially critical was the need for a father figure for young, black males growing up in female-headed households. Whether a male parent is absent due to incarceration, divorce, or another reason, male children often feel abandoned and without guidance. Many of these young men grow up with a real absence of any positive male role model and struggle with what it means to become a man. They feel the need to prove their maleness and often do so by acting out in violent or destructive ways.

All children are susceptible to peer pressure and the influence of popular culture, but young men without positive male role models are particularly susceptible. Children listen to violent music lyrics, play violent video games, watch violence portrayed on television and in the movies. Many adopt negative role models such as “gangsta” rappers and other celebrities that glorify violence, and emulate what they see. Violence is a peer group supported issue and, too often, youth encourage each other to engage in anti-social activity.

When parents or other caring adults are missing from children’s lives, youth-serving programs like TEAM UP, Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BGBS), and Take Stock in Children, step in to fill the void by matching youth with positive role models who can provide guidance, support, and important life skills training to children.

The **TEAM UP** after-school program is designed to enhance students’ academic performance while providing cultural enrichment and social activities. The program is offered in four elementary schools, seven middle schools, and one high school.

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a national organization that helps children reach their full potential by matching adult volunteers with children from predominantly single parent families. Jacksonville’s BBBS chapter offers three programs: the *One-to-One Community Program* matches an individual or couple with a child according to common interests and goals. Volunteers commit to meet with their matches a minimum of six hours per month for one year; the *Bigs in Schools Program* provides weekly mentoring sessions for a year on school premises; and the *Children of Promise Jacksonville* program matches youth whose parent or parents are incarcerated in state or federal prison with adult volunteers recruited from the faith community. This program primarily serves children living on the north side of Jacksonville.

The **Take Stock in Children** program accomplishes two important things for children. First, it puts a positive adult role model in the student’s life. Secondly, by purchasing a 4-year pre-paid college plan for each participant, Take Stock changes students’ expectations for life. Many Take Stock participants come from poor neighborhoods where few students expect to earn college degrees or even attend college. Students who fulfill their Take Stock contract to stay drug- and crime-free, remain in school, maintain a 2.5 grade point average, and meet weekly with the assigned mentor on school grounds will receive college tuition. The real possibility of earning a degree opens up a world of new opportunities for the future of these children.

In Duval County, only three percent of the 15,000 to 17,000 students eligible to participate in Take Stock are served currently by the program. Mentors are needed to work with the many additional students who wish to participate.

Juvenile Justice System Efforts

The juvenile court system is part of the circuit court and its purpose is to rehabilitate, not just punish, juveniles in trouble with the law. When a juvenile (a person under the age of eighteen) is arrested and charged with a crime, he or she will be tried as a juvenile in juvenile court, or the charges are transferred to adult criminal court. The child is said to be delinquent if a juvenile court finds him responsible for a crime; the court may order the delinquent child to be committed to home-based probation, a licensed childcare agency, or the Department of Juvenile Justice. Restitution by the child (or parents) and community service also may be ordered.

Not all juvenile offenders remain in the juvenile justice system. Judges and prosecutors sometimes decide that youth are so violent or such chronic offenders, or their offenses are so heinous, that their cases are more appropriately handled by adult courts than juvenile courts. Research has shown that the practice of trying juveniles as adults actually results in increased crime. Youth transferred to adult court are twice as likely to re-offend as those sent to the

juvenile justice system. Florida is one of 15 states that allow prosecutors the discretion to have a juvenile's case heard in adult court. Children found guilty of crimes through adult court face possible jail or prison sentences.

During the 2004-05 school year, 7,618 Duval County juvenile referrals were made to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Of these, 22 percent (1,673 referrals) were school related, meaning the offense occurred on school grounds, at a bus stop, or on a school bus. Duval's school-related offense rate (the number of referrals per 1,000 middle and high school students) of 23 is higher than the state average rate of 19. Duval's referral rate is categorized as high among Florida's large school districts but trails the rates of three similarly categorized districts – Volusia (40), Polk (35), and Pinellas (33).

Misdemeanor offenses constituted the majority (63 percent) of the state's 28,008 school-related offense referrals in 2004-05. Included in this number were assault/battery (20 percent) and disorderly conduct (17 percent) offenses. Burglary and aggravated assault account for the majority of serious felony offenses.

A majority of Florida's juvenile offenders, approximately 59 percent, have only one arrest in their lifetime, and never return to the juvenile justice system. However, fourteen percent of first time offenders are at high risk of becoming chronic juvenile offenders. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice developed the *Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services* program to focus attention and resources on the early identification of these high-risk juveniles and intervention in their cases.

The Intensive Services program is modeled after Orange County, California's successful *8% Early Intervention Program*. The original program took a close look at the lives of habitual criminals to determine commonalities of experience. The study revealed correlations between risk factors in the areas of family, school, drug use and pre-delinquent behavior and becoming a habitual criminal. By assessing all juvenile offenders for these risks, officials in California (and now in Florida) are able to identify juveniles most likely to become chronic offenders and continue their criminal behavior into adulthood. The assessment focuses on five major areas:

- Neighborhood – Is it in a high or low crime area?
- School – Are there attendance problems, lack of achievement; behavior problems, or referrals?
- Family – Is there a lack of adult supervision (due to divorce, incarcerated or absent parent, or other reason), neglect, or abuse?
- Substance abuse – Is there a pattern of regular abuse beyond experimentation?
- Behavior – Has the juvenile shown pre-delinquent behaviors such as running away, stealing from family and others, or gang involvement?

Juveniles assessed with problems in at least three of the risk categories are placed in the Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services program. There, the juvenile and his/her family receive counseling and other supportive services. The program has had very good results with a 19 percent recidivism (re-offense) rate.

Numerous programs intervene with first time youth offenders in an effort to end their criminal activity before it becomes an established pattern of behavior. They include:

PTI (Pre-Trial Intervention Program) is a diversion court program that keeps first-time offending youth and adults from getting a criminal record. Participants agree to remain law abiding, perform community service, pay restitution, and participate in counseling. Those who cannot abide by the terms of their agreement have their cases referred for appropriate prosecution and court action.

Turning Point: Rethinking Violence. This multi-agency program in Jacksonville was developed to expose first-time juvenile offenders to the real world consequences of violence. The combination of experience with trauma in the hospital setting and intensive therapy and counseling has been very successful.

Victim Impact Panel. Facilitated by the State Attorney’s Office, survivors of homicide go to schools or other locations to share what it feels like when a loved one is killed. Panelists teach the consequences of violent actions. Over 15,000 Jacksonville students have heard the panel’s message.

Truancy Programs. Florida students are required by law to remain enrolled in school until age 16. Truancy officers work to keep students on their school campuses and attending classes. The committee heard that local truancy programs lack funding and are not effective in their efforts to keep students in school.

Communities in Schools. These programs focus on high school students who have demonstrated behavior problems and who are at high risk of dropping out of school. Communities in Schools serves more than 6,000 students at fifty area schools annually through mentoring, literacy and after-school programs. One program assists jailed teenagers in developing skills to complete high school and seek employment upon release.

Efforts to Strengthen Neighborhoods

Several resource persons spoke of the importance of building strong neighborhoods rich in social capital, where neighbors share ideas, personal connections and trust that foster cooperation among residents. Such neighborhoods, with residents who can be counted on to speak out and act for social control, are associated with lower rates of violence.

Economic Opportunity Initiatives

While the employment picture looks positive for the city as a whole, unemployment among minorities remains significantly higher than among the majority labor force. The 2000 U.S. Census reported 5.0 percent unemployment among Duval County’s civilian labor force aged 16 and older. Significant unemployment disparities were measured along racial lines:

Table 4

Duval County Unemployment Rates, 2000

Unemployment	Both Sexes	Male	Female
Total	5.0%	4.8%	5.2%
White alone	3.8%	3.5%	4.0%
Black (1)	8.3%	8.9%	7.8%
Asian (1)	5.1%	5.0%	5.3%
Hispanic (2)	6.2%	5.3%	7.2%

Notes:

1. Alone or in combination with one or more other races.
2. Of any race.

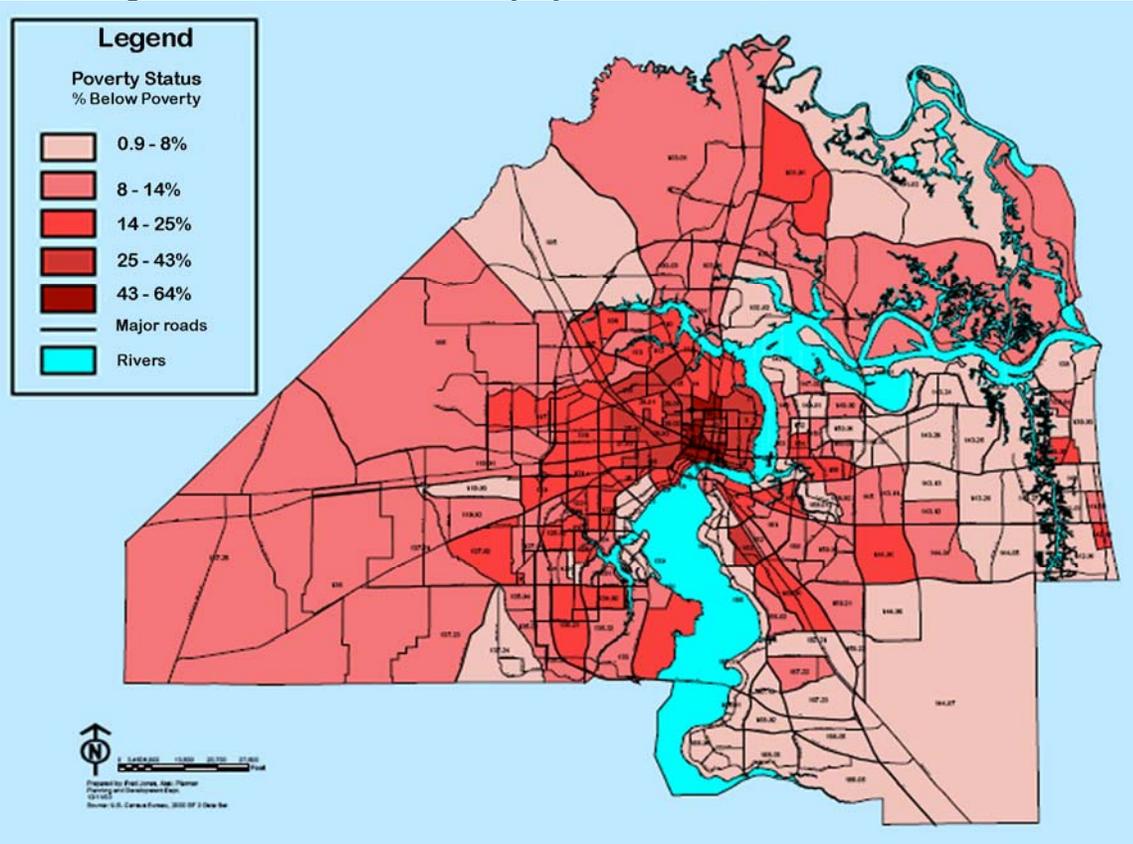
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The Florida Department of Labor estimated a 4.2% unemployment rate for Duval County in 2005. No evidence suggests that the racial disparities measured in 2000 have changed significantly.

Unemployment is tied directly to poverty and, as shown in Map 5, high rates of poverty are concentrated in Jacksonville's urban core neighborhoods.

Map 5

Percentage of Persons Below Poverty by Census Tract, 1999



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

There are many reasons why vacant jobs go unfilled in a tight labor market. Some attribute the inability of the unemployed or underemployed to find suitable work to their lack of educational attainment, work skills, and work ethic that make them unqualified to get or keep a job. Some qualified workers lack access to the public or private transportation needed to reach available living wage jobs. Others have criminal records that bar them from some occupations altogether and make them unemployable in other positions (e.g., convicted felons cannot work on certain government contracts or associate with other felons).

Unemployment and underemployment, coupled with job discrimination (both real and imagined), play into the frustration of many. When legitimate economic opportunities are beyond reach or unattractive to potential workers, some turn to crime, especially robbery and illegal drug sales, for survival. Robbery is associated with 19 percent of murders in Jacksonville, and the selling of illegal drugs contributes to violence that frequently leads to murder.

Small neighborhood businesses play a vital role in providing economic opportunity through accessible, entry-level jobs. They improve neighborhood dynamics by creating social and economic connections among the residents. Community resources, such as the Small Business Center at the Chamber of Commerce, encourage neighborhood business

development and entrepreneurship through micro loans and small business assistance. WorkSource focuses on regional job development and job placement through its eight career centers.

The Chamber of Commerce's Blueprint for Prosperity's long-range plans call for developing "an environment that attracts businesses with high-wage jobs to Jacksonville's Westside, Northside and downtown," and higher paying jobs in high-poverty areas. Empowerment and enterprise zone programs and other economic development activities offer economic incentives to businesses to attract new jobs to areas where they are needed and encourage existing companies to expand their operations.

The City of Jacksonville is one of the largest employers in the region and indirectly employs thousands more through contracts for goods and services, especially construction services. At one time the City operated a minority business program that set aside 20 percent of City contracts for competitive bid by minority-owned businesses. According to the City, that program did little to build the capacity of local businesses because out-of-town minority contractors out-bid locals to secure the set-aside contracts and majority contractors manipulated the system to pass funds, but not work, through minority business partners.

The set-aside program has been replaced by skills training for small business owners and improved access to capital, programs intended to build the capacity of local minority-owned businesses. In addition, the City has made changes to its contract bonding requirements that prevented some small businesses from competing for contracts, and has divided large city projects into smaller components that are within the reach of small businesses.

Although the City and its agencies have created some programs to address the underlying economic risk factors for violence, they are not always perceived as relevant or adequate by the populations most affected by the problems. These programs do not always work and are not all well-received by targeted neighborhoods or citizens. For example, some minority business owners expressed dissatisfaction with changes to the city's contract set-aside policy. They felt shut out of the business opportunities created by the Better Jacksonville Plan and the Super Bowl, and do not believe they are in a position to share in the city's growing prosperity.

Law Enforcement Strategies

Jacksonville's citizens expect to live in safe neighborhoods. They look to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office for protection through crime prevention and the apprehension of criminals.

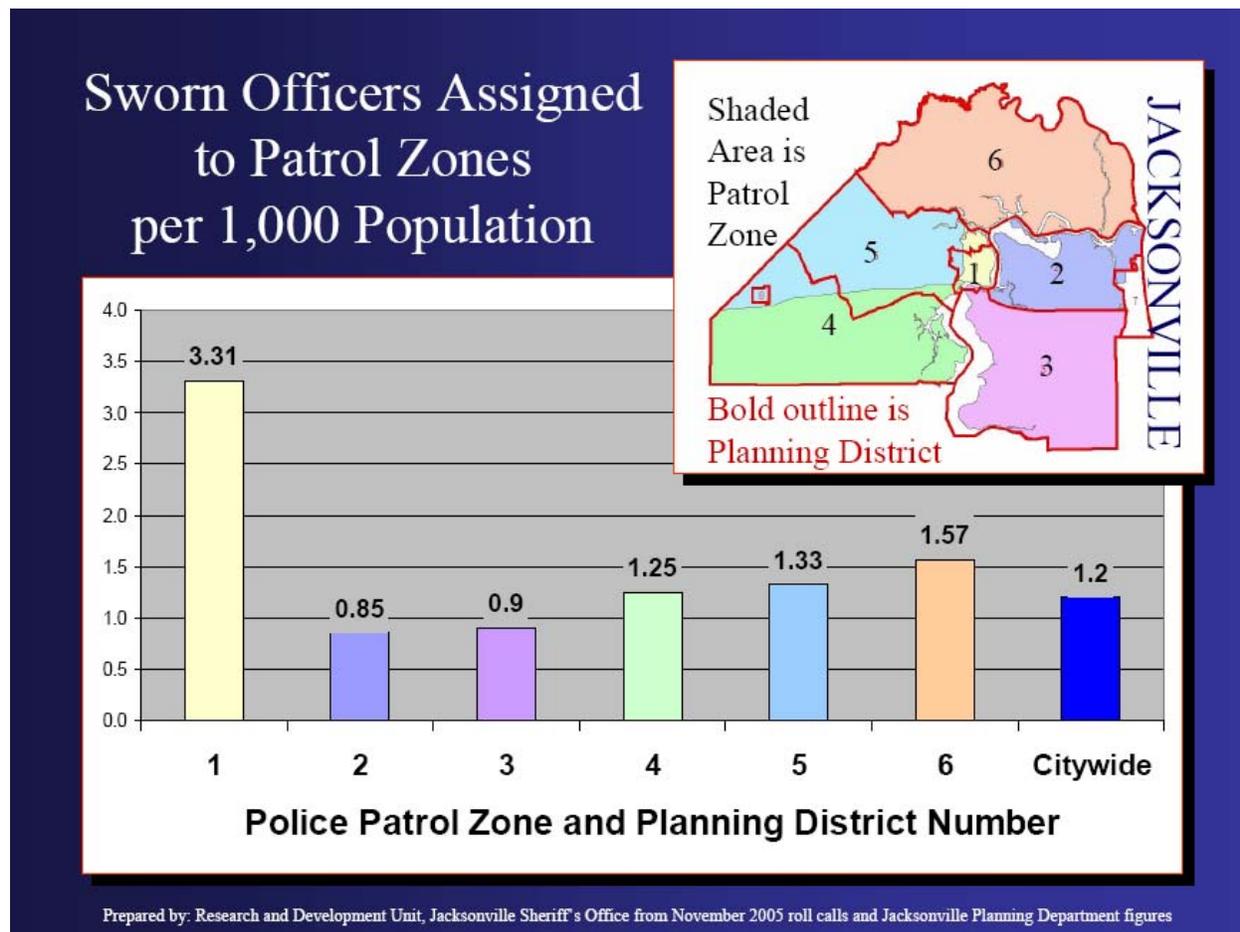
The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office received over 1.6 million calls in 2005. During that year, 208,563 traffic citations were written, 138,021 incident reports were submitted, and 50,318 arrests were processed through the jail. As of this writing, JSO has an authorized strength of 1,662 sworn officers, including police officers, detectives, and deputies. Civilian employees (634) handle emergency communications and crime analysis, provide support services to the sworn officers, and operate as community service offers. Another 688 personnel work as corrections officers in the jail and pre-trial detention facilities.

The City of Jacksonville has 204 sworn officers per 100,000 population. This figure includes both officers assigned to patrol zones and those assigned to non-patrol duties, such as supervisors and officers in the vice and narcotics divisions. In 2004, Jacksonville's rate of officers per population ranked eighth among Florida cities with populations over 100,000. Orlando ranked highest with 321 officers per 100,000 population, followed by Tampa (301), Ft. Lauderdale (275), Miami (261), Hollywood (229), Clearwater (229), and St. Petersburg (216). In comparison, the average number of officers per 100,000 population was 230 for the nation and 280 for large U.S. cities (over 250,000).

JSO assigns 1.2 sworn officers per 1,000 Jacksonville residents to patrol duty. The city is divided into six patrol zones of varying sizes and population composition. As shown in Map 6, the rate of officers on patrol within these zones varies greatly from a low of 0.85 officers per 1,000 persons in Zone 2, to a high of 3.31 officers per 1,000 in Zone 1, which includes Jacksonville's downtown and inner core neighborhoods.

Map 6

Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Patrol Zones



Source: Jacksonville Sheriff's Office

Approximately \$273 million, or one-third of Jacksonville's FY 2006 general fund revenue is budgeted for JSO law enforcement, administration, corrections, investigations, and Homeland Security activities. Local per capita law enforcement expenditures have increased slightly in recent years, but Jacksonville continues to spend less per capita on law enforcement than Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, Tampa, Miami and several other Florida cities.

In addition to working regular beat patrols, JSO's sworn officers participate in numerous law enforcement initiatives including:

Neighborhood Watch is comprised of 642 active neighborhood programs that function as the "eyes and ears" of JSO. Keeping neighborhoods from reaching the tipping point, where they move from safe to unsafe, is a priority of JSO's crime prevention efforts.

Each patrol sector within the City's six city patrol zones has a **Sheriff's Advisory Council (ShAdCo)**. Hundreds of citizens and business people belong to these councils and meet regularly with police personnel to:

- discuss concerns and exchange crime information,
- report suspected criminal activity,
- help solve traffic, patrol, safety and communication problems, and
- promote youth outreach and athletic activities.

JSO uses this community policing technique to build relationships and understanding between citizens and police.

The **Jacksonville Housing Authority** uses a comprehensive approach to crime prevention that tries to create safe communities within their housing complexes. JHA's strategy involves strong management to exclude residents and guests who might engage in criminal behavior and relies on the cooperation of the residents to patrol their neighborhoods and cooperate with JSO law enforcement officers. JHA's social services initiative proactively works with parents, offering them support and employment and job skills training, and with youth, providing them with programs that focus on leadership, education, culture, sports, and character building.

JSO works with neighborhoods on physical improvements that will reduce overall crime. The **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)** program eliminates unsafe conditions by removing physical structures, modifying landscaping, adding lighting, and making other improvements to increase visibility and discourage criminal activity.

Project Safe Neighborhoods, operated by JSO, is responsible for the distribution of hundreds of free gun locks and gun safety information in Jacksonville.

JSO's **Drug Abatement Response Team (DART)** is a multi-agency law enforcement effort that addresses neighborhood crime problems at their source. DART combines rigorous building code violation enforcement with heightened patrols and law enforcement to target sites where activities such as drug sales, prostitution and gang activities occur.

Other Strategies

Community groups and the City of Jacksonville have responded to Jacksonville's escalating murder rate with several new initiatives intended to remove guns from the streets, actively engage youth in positive experiences, help the unemployed secure permanent jobs, and increase law enforcement action. The following programs have recently been announced since January 2006:

No Murders in May was a call for the end of murder in Jacksonville by *MAD DADS* (Men Against Destruction Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder). This community organization seeks to engage residents in the prevention of violence and murder through citizen street patrols in high crime areas, providing chaperones at community events, and counseling on the streets.

Growing Great Neighborhoods: Seeds of Change is Mayor John Peyton's initiative calling for city and community collaboration in addressing neighborhood challenges through beautification and infrastructure enhancements, public safety and housing. Two neighborhoods—Historic Arlington and Northwest Jacksonville/Moncrief—were selected for the pilot program based on neighborhood crime rates, community leadership, and an existing neighborhood action plan. These areas will

receive intensive city services including litter removal, code enforcement and public amenities. As part of the *Growing Great Neighborhoods* plan, the city will use the Jacksonville Human Right Commission's Study Circles Initiative to open the lines of communication between the community and law enforcement.

The city's **Job Opportunities Boost Summer (JOBS)** and summer camp programs encourage youth to get off the streets and stay out of trouble. The city, FCCJ, and the school district, and local businesses are providing 6-week work opportunities to youth. Over 5,100 camp scholarships were provided by the city and community through the Jacksonville Children's Commission with support from business sponsors.

The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office recently announced **Operation Safe Streets**, a major law enforcement initiative designed to prevent murder in Jacksonville by focusing on the removal of illegal guns and violent criminals from the streets of geographic areas with disproportionately high rates of violent crime. The comprehensive plan brings together twelve local, state, and federal law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. They will work together to ensure that any felon who carries a gun or anyone who uses a gun while committing a crime will be apprehended, prosecuted, and receive the maximum sentence possible for the crime committed.

Operation Safe Streets will also

- work to identify and shut down the sources of guns that supply local criminals,
- use the Crime Analysis Unit and geographic mapping system to track violent criminals and their networks, and to effectively deploy law enforcement resources,
- strictly enforce probation and parole conditions placed on violent criminals and gun offenders, and
- dismantle criminal organizations involved in violence.

Many law enforcement agencies successfully employ "get tough" enforcement practices similar to those included in Operation Safe Streets to quickly establish order in out-of-control situations. According to research, the deployment of substantial resources – personnel and equipment—to trouble "hot spots" may be effective in the short term, but is not sustainable. When the immediate crisis has passed, resources are re-deployed to new "hot spots." It was noted that ongoing maintenance is required to keep crime from re-emerging in the original location.

Research conducted by the University of Chicago compared "get tough" enforcement practices to crime prevention measures. It found that the short-term positive effect of lowering crime rates through "get tough" programs was overshadowed by the long-term negative consequences of the alienation of individuals who were arrested without probable cause or enough evidence to prosecute.

Faith-based Efforts

Faith institutions are in a unique position to impact the safety and welfare of the community and its citizens by teaching moral values that decry violence and uphold the sanctity of life. A unified effort among Jacksonville's diverse faith community would extend the reach of messages heard within individual houses of worship to the greater community.

During the study, both the A.M.E. Ministerial Alliance and the Baptist Ministers' Conference reached out publicly beyond their individual congregations to engage the community in efforts to reduce violence and murder.

The African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Ministerial Alliance has focused its efforts on building public awareness, stakeholder involvement and positive communities. **Project Crime** has created and aired radio and television commercials that encourage community involvement in reducing violence and murder. A door-to-door campaign to spread these messages was conducted in East Arlington, Southside, and Lincoln Court neighborhoods.

Jobs-for-Guns is a joint initiative of the A.M.E. Ministerial Alliance and Operation New Hope. The program combines a gun buyback program with a job opportunity program. Eligible individuals who turn in guns will be enrolled in Operation New Hope's Career Development training course and receive mentoring and assistance in securing permanent employment.

Empowering Youth Summer Work Program was designed by the Baptist Ministers' Conference and HOPE Inc. to provide summer jobs for youth ages 15 to 18 with local businesses.

Transitional Services for Ex-Offenders

The county corrections facilities and state and federal prisons offer inmates rehabilitative services in the areas of education, life and vocational skills training, drug treatment, and mental health counseling, but the committee heard from resource speakers that the need for these programs exceeds their supply. However, participation in the training and education programs is voluntary, not mandatory. Inmates who take advantage of the opportunity to earn a GED (General Education Degree), improve their TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) score to 9th grade or higher, and participate in a work release program are the most successful after release from prison. Recidivism rates among education and vocational training program graduates are much lower than rates among non-graduates.

The 2001 JCCI report *Services for Ex-Offenders* reviewed the needs of ex-offenders to successfully return to the community and live free of crime. It then compared those needs to the services offered to ex-offenders during imprisonment and following release. A gap was discovered between the two, and recommendations were made to eliminate it. However, the gap still exists in 2006. The current 70 percent recidivism (repeat offense) rate indicates the failure of interim efforts to sufficiently improve rehabilitation and transitional services to ex-offenders.

The success of re-entry programs is limited by discrimination against ex-offenders and the many barriers they face in returning to work and life after incarceration. Two successful transition programs in Jacksonville – one serving former jail inmates, the other, former prison inmates— help ex-offenders overcome those barriers:

Inside/Outside House offers transitional housing and supportive programming to up to 5 young men after release from the county jail. Inside/Outside House residents must be male, certified as adults, come from the county jail, be at high risk for recidivism, and homeless. Participation can be either voluntary or court-ordered, and residents can stay until they reach the age of 21.

In 2002, *Operation New Hope* became the first national model for faith-based partnerships when it received federal funding to begin the **Ready4Work** program. The initiative brings together the business community, faith community, and employers to offer ex-offenders assistance re-entering the community after release from prison. Most of the felons who lived in Jacksonville before going to prison return to Jacksonville, and 80 to 85 percent will face difficulty finding employment because of their criminal records.

Ready4Work program recruits are non-violent offenders, ages 18-34, and either male or female. They are paired with a mentor and attend a two week job and life skills training program that gives them self-confidence and practice developing interview skills. Following training, job interviews are scheduled with employers who are willing to hire Ready4Work participants. Advocates vouch for the reliability of these workers. Without these recommendations, it is unlikely that employers would hire these individuals.

Re-entry programs are important to the community because they have the potential to significantly impact recidivism rates. Recidivism among Ready4Work and other successful re-entry programs has been measured between 3 percent and 25 percent compared to an overall 70 percent recidivism.

What Works? What Doesn't?

National Research

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), U.S. Department of Justice, reported to Congress in 1997 the results of a review of scientific evaluations of crime prevention practices. Special emphasis was placed on assessing programs' impact on reducing juvenile crime and violence. The NIJ Research in Brief (July 1998) summarized the report's findings as follows:

These programs are likely to be effective in preventing crime.

- For infants: Frequent home visits by nurses and other professionals.
- For preschoolers: Classes with weekly home visits by preschool teachers.
- For delinquent and at-risk preadolescents: Family therapy and parent training.
- For schools:
 - Organizational development for innovation.
 - Communication and reinforcement of clear, consistent norms.
 - Teaching of social competency skills
 - Coaching of high-risk youth in "thinking skills."
- For older male ex-offenders: Vocational training.
- For rental housing with drug dealing: Nuisance abatement action on landlords.
- For high-crime hot spots: Extra police patrols.
- For high-risk repeat offenders:
 - Monitoring by specialized police units.
 - Incarceration.
- For domestic abusers who are employed: On-scene arrests.
- For convicted offenders: Rehabilitation programs with risk-focused treatments.
- For drug-using offenders in prison: Therapeutic community treatment programs.

On the other hand, NIJ reports that scientific evaluation did not find evidence that the following programs prevented crime or reduced the risk factors for crimes. While research published subsequent to the NIJ report may support the efficacy of some of these programs, the value of many of these programs remain scientifically questionable in terms of directly preventing crime or significantly reducing risk factors in and of themselves:

- Gun buyback programs.
- Community mobilization against crime in general in high-crime poverty areas.
- Counseling and peer counseling of students in schools.
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) programs.
- Drug prevention classes focused on fear and other emotional appeals, including self-esteem enhancement.
- School-based leisure-time enrichment programs.

- Summer jobs or subsidized work programs for at-risk youth.
- Short-term nonresidential training programs for at-risk youth.
- Diversion from court to job training as a condition of case dismissal.
- Neighborhood watch programs organized with police.
- Arrests of juveniles for minor offenses.
- Arrests of unemployed suspects for domestic assault.
- Increased arrests or raids on drug market locations.
- Storefront police offices.
- Police newsletters with local crime information.
- Correctional boot camps using traditional military basic training.
- “Scared Straight” programs wherein minor juvenile offenders visit adult prisons.
- Shock probation, shock parole, and split sentences adding jail time to probation or parole.
- Home detention with electronic monitoring.
- Intensive supervision on parole or probation.
- Rehabilitation programs using vague, unstructured counseling.
- Residential programs for juvenile offenders using challenging experiences in rural settings.

Promising Practices from Other Communities

Community Policing. New York City, San Diego and Tampa are examples of communities that successfully reduced violent crime and murder through the implementation of community policing techniques and involvement of citizens in crime prevention efforts.

Violence and Murder Reduction. Operation Ceasefire is an innovative and effective violent crime reduction strategy that has dramatically reduced the homicide rate of African American males in Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis and other American cities. It was first implemented in mid-1996 in Boston and appears to have been principally responsible for a two-thirds reduction in homicide victimization among those 24 and under citywide.

Small, active street groups of 5 to 20 members generate nearly all serious street violence. These are usually not gangs, but informal groups of individuals. Even in the hardest hit neighborhoods, very few individuals are involved in these groups, typically less than 5 percent of young men in the high-risk age group. An even smaller number, perhaps 10 percent of the high risk group, are “impact players” that initiate crime and violence.

Group dynamics—peer pressure and norms—drive violence and murder, but arrest, trial, conviction, and rehabilitation deal with the individual. The solution to the problem requires a focus on the group involved in violence, rather than the individual. The strategic intervention includes direct, face-to-face, sustained engagement with street groups by the community, law enforcement and social service providers, who stand together and speak in one voice.

The most fundamental part of the Operation Ceasefire process is to deliver the messages to the targeted groups that what they are doing is wrong, they are destroying the community; that they are important to the community; and the violence must stop. This is a message they hear from law enforcement, but it is ignored because law enforcement has no standing with the group. Instead, the message is delivered by the moral voice of the community—respected local figures, parents, ministers, activists, and offenders and ex-offenders. When the message is delivered to the group, it can reach and change the group norms that drive violent behavior.

The message is backed up by law enforcement, which pledges to hold the group accountable for homicide. If a member of a group kills, the entire group will be sanctioned. At the same time, help with employment, education, treatment, mentoring, and other services is offered to

group members. Since the number of individuals needing help is typically small, there is usually sufficient service program capacity available to serve these people.

Transitional housing and services for ex-offenders. The Delancey Street Project is a rehabilitation program that empowers substance abusers, former felons, and others to support themselves by operating a variety of businesses, including a moving company, restaurant, catering center, and bookstore-café. The residents help one another, without the help of professionals or government funding, and at no charge to the clients. Program graduates gain an academic education, marketable skills, accountability and responsibility, and the chance to lead decent, productive lives. Formed in 1971 in San Francisco, and now with additional locations in New York, New Mexico, and North Carolina, the program has helped over 14,000 individuals overcome their problems.

Drug Rehabilitation. California's Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act, also known as Proposition 36, changed state law to allow first and second time nonviolent drug possession offenders the opportunity to receive substance abuse treatment instead of incarceration. The treatment approach is expected to prove more effective in reducing drug abuse and crime than incarceration. Since the program began in 2001:

- the rate of incarceration for drug-possession offenses has decreased 34.3 percent;
- California's violent crime rate has not increased. In fact, it has declined at a rate higher than the national average;
- pre- and post- Proposition 36 and drug court program completion rates are comparable; and
- the initiative is saving the state hundreds of millions of dollars, an estimated \$275 million in the first year, alone.

Other states, including Arizona, Maryland and New York are using similar initiatives to divert non-violent drug offenders to treatment.

Juvenile Rehabilitation. The *Youth Model* developed by the Missouri Division of Youth Services was identified as a best practice in juvenile rehabilitation. The program emphasized the rehabilitation of young offenders in homelike, small group settings that incorporate constant therapy and positive peer pressure under the direct guidance of well-trained counselors. Many youths are also assigned a 'tracker' who meets with them regularly to monitor their progress. Nonresidential 'day treatment' centers offer a way station for many teens after leaving a residential facility. A long-term recidivism study of the Missouri program showed 73% of youths released in 1999 avoided either prison or probation for the three year period studied.

Transportation. During the early 1990s, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, faced a situation similar to one that challenges Jacksonville today. Many inner-city workers could not reach jobs training programs, educational opportunities, or jobs in outlying areas because they simply could not get there. They did not own vehicles, and the public transportation system did not serve outlying areas where job growth was occurring, especially at night or on the weekends when many shifts for entry-level positions were available. The Cedar Rapids' Neighborhood Transportation Service (NTS) was created to provide door-to-door transportation to and from work and job training programs on weekends and evenings when the city bus system did not operate. The original program focused on a specific low-income neighborhood, and has since expanded to serve all of Cedar Rapids and two adjacent cities.

NTS operates small buses, and riders pay a small fee per ride that covers approximately one-third of the cost of the service. As an added community benefit, the program employs residents from the neighborhoods it serves.

Reliable transportation has helped NTS riders keep and advance in their jobs, work extended hours, or change to better jobs.

What Works and Doesn't Work in Jacksonville?

The committee studied successful violence-reducing programs operating in Jacksonville and other communities, and found those programs have many important characteristics in common. Successful programs:

- address missed opportunities for prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation, e.g., mentor programs that pair children who lack positive role models with caring, responsible adults;
- isolate violence-prone youth from each other;
- utilize a collaborative, multi-discipline approach to address the many facets of complex problems;
- involve community stakeholders and parents;
- direct resources to simultaneously eliminate identified problems and create solutions; and
- bring about systemic change to achieve long-term success.

Identified practices and policies that the study committee determined do not work or are counterproductive in their efforts to reduce violence and murders in Jacksonville include:

- Expecting the JSO to solve the murder problem for the rest of us by “arresting our way out of the situation.”
- Failure on the part of the City of Jacksonville and JSO to overcome language barriers, which limits Jacksonville’s growing immigrant population from having meaningful access to many social services, including police protection.
- Weed and Seed programs that “weed out” or remove problems from the community, but fail to “seed” or implement meaningful improvements.
- Repeated incarceration of petty drug users with short-term jail sentences that return these offenders to the streets before they can undergo meaningful drug treatment or mental health counseling.
- Co-incarceration of like-minded violence-oriented juveniles.
- Uneven enforcement of Jacksonville’s building, zoning and property safety regulations sends a signal to entire communities that no one cares, or is paying attention to their plight.
- Limited transitional services and housing for ex-offenders who are attempting to create conventional, law-abiding lives in the local community.
- Reduction and/or termination of funding of ongoing successful programs in favor of new, untested programs.
- Flawed school discipline models, such as out-of-school suspension for disruptive behavior, that unintentionally reward misbehavior and relocate problems to the neighborhood rather than addressing them.

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Zann Williams
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What's Already Out There, Solutions for America, Pew Partnership for Civic Change

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Committee members met together 17 times from March through June 2006. In addition, the management team met many times to provide guidance and direction for the study. The committee received information from 35 knowledgeable resource people and from additional research material.

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About JCCI

Jacksonville Community Council Inc. (JCCI) was created in 1975 with the goal of improving the quality of life in Jacksonville through informed citizen participation in public affairs. JCCI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan broad-based civic organization. It involves citizens in community issues through open dialogue, impartial research consensus building, and leadership development.

Each year, JCCI produces an annual report on the quality of life in Jacksonville. It also selects issues for in-depth community study. Diverse study committees meet weekly, gaining a thorough understanding of the problem and reaching consensus on key findings as well as recommended solutions.

In addition to its annual studies, the Quality of Life Progress Report, JCCI plans and coordinates services for the United Way of Northeast Florida and the Human Services Council, a coalition of funders of human services. JCCI Forward, an initiative that seeks to involve community minded people with important issues facing the community., provides the venue for up and coming leadership to be involved, engaged, and connected with business and government leaders.

Upon request, JCCI provides a variety of planning, research, consultation, and facilitation services under contract.

More information about JCCI and all of its projects is available at www.jcci.org.

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