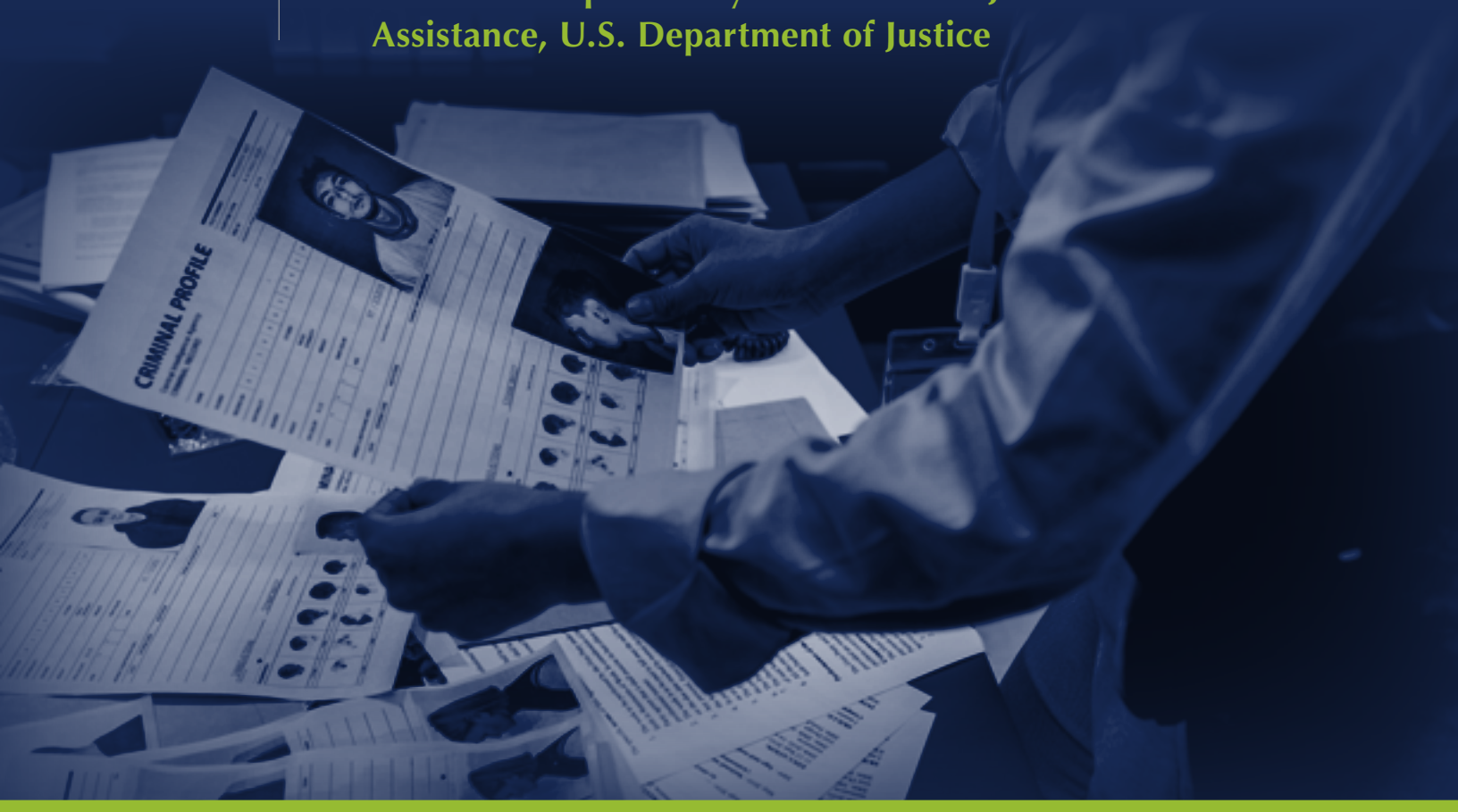


AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PASCO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE'S FOCUSED DETERRENCE STRATEGY

**A Review Requested by the Bureau of Justice
Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice**





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Report Prepared By: The National Policing Institute
2550 S. Clark St, Suite 1130
Arlington, VA 22202

Authors: Travis Taniguchi, PhD, *Research Director*
ttaniguchi@policinginstitute.org

Katherine Hoogesteyn, PhD, *Senior Research Associate*
khoogesteyn@policinginstitute.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Focused deterrence is an evidence-based policing strategy grounded in the idea of specific deterrence and directing intervention towards a limited group of people deemed to be at high risk of re-offending. Research has found that focused deterrence can be effective in reducing serious violent crime (Braga et al., 2018). Looking to capitalize on this evidence to reduce violent and drug crimes, the Pasco County Sheriff's Office (PCSO) developed a data-driven risk assessment method to identify individuals at high risk of re-offending for targeting with focused deterrence. A proposal to implement this program was submitted to a competitive request for proposals (*Strategies for Policing Innovation, SPI*) issued by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), U.S. Department of Justice.

In 2018, following a competitive and independent peer review process conducted by BJA, the PCSO was awarded an SPI grant to implement focused deterrence.¹ As part of the SPI award, PCSO was supported by technical assistance from CNA with project evaluation efforts led by Dr. Bryanna Fox at the University of South Florida.² The approach adopted by PCSO to identify individuals at high risk of re-offending consisted of a risk assessment tool that only considered criminal history; gang membership; suspect of victim in a shooting; involvement with drug distribution, possession, and use; and contact with PCSO deputies. Lists were disaggregated into *violent prolific offenders (VPO)* and *narcotic prolific offenders (NPO)* with minor differences in scoring and prioritization criteria.

Prior to the SPI award, news reports had raised concerns about the strategies used by the PCSO in addressing people identified as prolific offenders under PCSO's Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) strategy.³ *Tampa Bay Times* identified people claiming that PCSO had violated their privacy, included youth on the prolific offender list, and taken unjustified enforcement actions (McGrory & Bedi, 2020). Because of these concerns, BJA called for an objective "analysis of PCSO's [SPI-funded] focused deterrence strategy to examine the agency's compliance with established standards of best practice in focused deterrence implementation as supported by empirical research and qualitative expert evaluation" (BJA NTTAC Request for Proposal, 2021, p. 1).

1 SPI funding has been provided for focused deterrence strategies in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Kansas City, Missouri; Chula Vista, California; and Syracuse, New York. See www.smart-policing.com for more information.

2 Dr. Fox assisted the Tampa, Florida, Police Department (TPD) with their implementation of a focused deterrence program. Dr. Fox also led the evaluation efforts of TPD focused deterrence. The PCSO focused deterrence program shared many design elements with the TPD program.

3 It is important to distinguish between PCSO's various offender-focused strategies. PCSO's prolific offender list under their ILP strategy and the SPI-funded focused deterrence program (the violent prolific and narcotic prolific offender lists) tend to be conflated due to several similarities not the least of which was that both were referred to as focused deterrence initiatives. However, ILP and SPI programs were different: they were implemented at different times, the risk scoring criteria were different, and listees identified under ILP were not offered treatment or health services. For this reason, the prolific offender list under ILP may not meet the definition of a focused deterrence strategy.



Scope

The scope of this assessment was limited to actions taken by the PCSO using funding from the BJA SPI award. The National Policing Institute's (the Institute, formerly known as the National Police Foundation) assessment only reviewed activities conducted in conjunction with the focused deterrence strategy implemented with funding from BJA. Other strategies and programs operated by the PCSO, including agency activities that fall under the umbrella of Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP), were outside the scope of this evaluation. Within this scope, the Institute was tasked with exploring the following questions:

- 01** What is the PCSO's underlying philosophy and approach to violence reduction through its focused deterrence strategy?

- 02** Does the PCSO's approach meet standards of (a) constitutional and ethical policing; (b) community engagement; and (c) data and implementation transparency?

- 03** Do the activities undertaken by the PCSO as part of its focused deterrence strategy comply with best practices?

- 04** Are the (a) resources (e.g., mental health, substance use, employment, housing) offered to the individuals on the VPO and NPO lists adequate in terms of the needs of participants, and (b) organizations providing resources/assistance engaged in the focused deterrence strategy?

- 05** Did the PCSO consult and engage with residents in the development and execution of the program?

- 06** Are there focused deterrence programs in other jurisdictions that could provide peer learning opportunities?

Methods

A variety of methods were used to explore the implementation of focused deterrence in the PCSO. This included interviews and focus groups (with PCSO sworn and civilian staff, community stakeholders, and local area social services providers), document review (including review of training materials, outreach materials, and policies and procedures), and the collection and analysis of administrative data (including the collection and creation of a longitudinal panel dataset of people prioritized for focused deterrence). PCSO staff cooperated with all requests



including facilitating in-person and virtual meetings with staff, providing program implementation materials and data, and providing administrative data on police-public contacts.

Findings

There is a robust body of evidence that focused deterrence strategies can be effective in reducing serious targeted crime. The specific focused deterrence strategy designed by the PCSO has a less robust, but still promising, body of evidence of effectiveness. Based on reviewed documents and interviews conducted with PCSO personnel, PCSO was able to implement focused deterrence in a manner consistent with best practices, but program design was limited in some ways.

First, treatment dosage was low. Program staff reported that they were not able to dedicate sufficient time to develop relationships with people identified for focused deterrence. Several issues contributed to this finding. The initial outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic took place shortly after the program began. Six months later, BJA issued the stop-work order that halted the project until the present assessment was completed. The pandemic and the stop-work order directly impacted PCSO's engagement efforts and the treatment dosage.

Second, there was little evidence that listees identified for focused deterrence were subject to enhanced certainty of punishment or that PCSO actions would have led to heightened perception in the certainty of punishment (see Delaney, 2006 for similar limitations).

Third, successful focused deterrence programs implemented in other communities have made directed efforts to facilitate community involvement. Nevertheless, it is common for focused deterrence programs to vary in specific program elements.⁴ Existing research has not fully disaggregated the specific components of focused deterrence programs necessary to achieve a crime reduction impact (Engel et al., 2013).

An examination of contact data (i.e., arrests, pedestrian and traffic stops) between PSCO deputies and listees before, during, and after the program revealed no evidence that inclusion on either the VPO or NPO lists

An examination of contact data (i.e., arrests, pedestrian and traffic stops) between PSCO deputies and listees before, during, and after the program revealed no evidence that inclusion on either the VPO or NPO lists was associated with additional enforcement contact.

⁴ For a comparison of focused deterrence programs in published research see: www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL261/better-policing-toolkit/all-strategies/focused-deterrence/in-depth.html.



was associated with additional enforcement contact.⁵ Black people were somewhat over-represented on the focused deterrence lists, but there was no evidence that people of color were subject to a greater number of enforcement contacts while on a prioritized list compared to non-list periods.

Limitations

It was beyond the scope of this assessment to evaluate the PCSO's strategies that occurred outside of the BJA-provided SPI funding. The PCSO has compiled a prolific offender list under their ILP strategy in the past; we do not report on any aspects of the performance or efficacy of the ILP-based program. We were also unable to explore more qualitative aspects about the interactions between PCSO program staff and the people designated for focused deterrence. Our ability to explore contact between the PCSO and listees was limited to review of administrative data recorded by PCSO deputies including traffic stops, pedestrian stops, and other official community contacts.

Key Takeaways

- » Evaluation research supports the effectiveness of focused deterrence programs for serious crime reduction (e.g., Braga et al., 2018). The design of PCSO's focused deterrence strategy was evidence-based and consistent with a focused deterrence program implemented and evaluated in one other South Florida jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the PCSO strategy was missing some elements of focused deterrence strategies, particularly those related to community involvement, that have been implemented in other jurisdictions.
- » The process used by PCSO to identify people for focused deterrence were data-driven and supported by research. There were no demographic factors (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) included in prioritizing high risk of offending. Only established criminal behaviors (e.g., firearm or opioid-related arrests, gang affiliation, history of violence) were used in the identification criteria.
- » Contact between the PCSO and people on prioritized lists was not frequent. This raises questions as to whether the program could be successful in conveying the 'certainty of punishment' message to listees and if a meaningful deterrence effect could be established. Proactive communication was scheduled for every three months but the limited implementation window made it unclear if this level of contact was achieved. Contacts were limited due to resource constraint, the public health crisis associated with COVID-19, and the stop-work order issued by BJA.
- » A lack of local resources and social services available in Pasco County potentially hindered the service provision component of PCSO's focused deterrence strategy.
- » Black people were somewhat over-represented on the VPO (16.4%) and NPO (10.7%) lists relative to their

⁵ Contact was defined as being arrested or subject to a pedestrian or traffic stop by the PCSO.



population proportion in Pasco County (8.5%). This number must be interpreted with caution as even a small change of four to five listees would have altered this pattern and there are a variety of well documented issues with using population as a denominator in benchmarking policing activity.⁶

- » Based on the PCSO's records, nearly 75% of listees were not subjected to enforcement contacts (i.e., arrests, pedestrian or traffic stops) at all during the time they were identified for focused deterrence. There was no evidence that inclusion on the VPO or NPO list increased enforcement contact between listees and PCSO personnel. Both univariate and multivariate analyses suggested that contacts were lower during the times when people were on the VPO and NPO lists. These results suggest that the program may be having a deterrent effect and reducing criminal activity. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that these results are preliminary and firm conclusions of program effectiveness should rely on the more comprehensive outcome assessment being conducted by Dr. Fox.
- » There was no evidence that race or the interaction of race and list status affected the likelihood of enforcement contacts. Black and Hispanic people on the prioritized focused deterrence list were involved in enforcement contacts (arrests, traffic stops, and pedestrian stops) at about the same level as similarly situated White listees.

Black and Hispanic people on the prioritized focused deterrence list were involved in enforcement contacts (arrests, traffic stops, and pedestrian stops) at about the same level as similarly situated White listees.

⁶ There are substantial limitations of using census demographics as a benchmark for assessing disparity in police activity. This issue has been well documented for traffic stops (for example, Grogger & Ridgeway, 2006) and pedestrian stops (for example, Ridgeway, 2007). Further, these values should also be interpreted with caution because of the relatively small number of people included on the prolific offender list.



INTRODUCTION

Research has found that focused deterrence strategies can be effective in reducing crime at aggregate levels (Braga et al., 2018). Focused deterrence strategies are grounded in the idea of specific deterrence, directing intervention towards the few people most likely to re-offend in the future. There are three types of focused deterrence strategies: 1) programs that target gangs to reduce violent crime, such as Operation Ceasefire in Boston (Braga et al., 2001); 2) programs designed to address crime and disorder generated by drug markets, targeting drug market areas and individuals involved in the drug market (Corsaro et al., 2012); and 3) programs directed towards individuals who have a sizeable criminal history and are considered to be at high risk for continued offending (Papachristos et al., 2007). The PCSO's focused deterrence program was directed toward individuals with criminal histories that were at high risk of re-offending.

In 2018, following a competitive and independent peer review process conducted by BJA, the PCSO was awarded an SPI grant to implement focused deterrence (see Scott 2017 for a review of past SPI-funded focused deterrence programs).⁷ As part of the SPI award, PCSO was supported by technical assistance from CNA with project evaluation efforts led by Dr. Bryanna Fox at the University of South Florida.⁸ The approach adopted by the PCSO to identify individuals at high risk of re-offending consisted of a risk assessment tool that only considered criminal history; gang membership; suspect of victim in a shooting; involvement with drug distribution, possession, and use; and contact with PCSO deputies. Lists were disaggregated into *violent prolific offenders* (VPO) and *narcotic prolific offenders* (NPO) with minor differences in scoring and prioritization criteria.

Focused deterrence strategy programs generally involve multiple partners, including law enforcement, prosecutors, social service agencies, and community organizations. The partners develop strategies to identify the crime problem and the individual or group offenders, then notify the individuals directly to inform them that continued offending will not be tolerated and they will face swift punishment if they continue to offend. Social service agencies are often involved to link individuals to services, such as job training or substance abuse programs. The community is often involved to communicate to the individuals that their actions are not tolerated by the community members and to support the individuals in desisting from crime (e.g., Cincinnati's Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV), Engel et al., 2013; Chicago's Project Safe Neighborhoods, Papachristos et al., 2007). However, community involvement, including the activities and strategies used to engage a variety of community stakeholders, tends to not be well documented in published program evaluations (e.g., Tampa's Project Safe Neighborhoods; Fox et al., 2021).

⁷ SPI funding has been provided for focused deterrence strategies in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Kansas City, Missouri, Chula Vista, California, and Syracuse, New York. See www.smart-policing.com for more information.

⁸ Dr. Fox assisted the Tampa, Florida, Police Department (TPD) with their implementation of a focused deterrence program. Dr. Fox also led the evaluation efforts of TPD focused deterrence. The PCSO focused deterrence program shared many design elements with the TPD program.



The PCSO implemented a data-driven risk assessment method to identify people that had a higher likelihood of re-offending in the future based on recent past offending patterns and other criminogenic factors. Risk profiles were disaggregated into violent offenders (violent prolific offenders, VPO) and narcotic offenders (narcotic prolific offenders, NPO). The predictive method (described in more detail in the following section) assessed characteristics shown to increase risk of violent and firearm offending (Scott, 2017; Papachristos et al., 2015; Wheeler et al., 2019), including criminal history, known gang membership, suspect or victim in a shooting, and contact with the police. The NPO list included additional dimensions specific to drug offenses and drug distribution networks, including previous drug overdose events and social network analysis to identify drug distributors and others that are more central to drug distribution.

To qualify for inclusion on the VPO or NPO lists, the individual must have been arrested at least twice during the past three years for violent or narcotic-related crimes. Arrest information was retrieved from the PCSO's records management system and would have only included actions taken by PCSO. Arrests or other criminal involvement outside the county were not used in list scoring. People under 18 were excluded from inclusion on either the VPO or NPO lists. The identification and scoring process did *not* include information on race, ethnicity, gender, or other sociodemographic characteristics.

The PCSO has a history of employing data-driven strategies for crime control. Prior to the SPI-funded work, their Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) plan included a prolific offender list. Individuals identified as prolific offenders were subjected to monitoring and enhanced enforcement.⁹ However, advocates raised concerns about the identification of individuals as prolific offenders by the PCSO. Media attention specifically focused on privacy violations and youth inclusion on the prolific offender list. For example, the *Tampa Bay Times* reported that at least 21 families and individuals were persistently and unwarrantedly approached between 2016 and 2020 by PCSO deputies (McGrory & Bedi, 2020). They also reported that one in ten people identified as prolific offenders under ILP were under 18. Parents with youth on the list also reported numerous contacts by PCSO deputies. Representatives from PCSO strongly disputed these claims. Because of the concerns voiced by the news reports, BJA requested an objective, third-party assessment of the development and use of the SPI-funded VPO and NPO lists and the PCSO's strategy for implementing focused deterrence. It is critical to note, however, that the issues described in the media regarding PCSO's actions under ILP occurred prior to the BJA SPI funding award. However, more recently, the SPI-funded focused deterrence work was also criticized in news reports. Namely, the notification letters provided to NPOs and VPOs were described as "threatening"¹⁰ and "patronizing".¹¹

9 [fishersheriffs.org/uploads/docs/ILP_manual_final_edit_010716.pdf](https://www.fishersheriffs.org/uploads/docs/ILP_manual_final_edit_010716.pdf)

10 McGrory, K. (2021, July 24). Pasco Sheriff's Office letter targets residents for 'increased accountability'. *Tampa Bay Times*. https://www.tampabay.com/investigations/2021/07/24/pasco-sheriffs-office-letter-targets-residents-for-increased-accountability/?itm_source=parsely-api

11 Wallace, D. (2021, July 26). Florida sheriff's office defends letters to 'prolific offenders' about 'increased accountability'. *Fox News*. <https://www.foxnews.com/us/florida-sheriff-office-letter-prolific-offenders-accountability-crime>



Scope of the Assessment

The scope of this assessment was limited to actions taken by the PCSO using funds from BJA SPI funding between December 2020 and August 2021. The Institute's assessment was focused on determining if the focused deterrence strategy implemented by PCSO, and funded by BJA SPI funding, was aligned with the best available research. Critically, the review was only focused on the focused deterrence strategy that was implemented with funding from BJA. Other strategies and programs operated by the PCSO, including agency activities that fall under the umbrella of ILP were outside the scope of this evaluation. Within this scope, the Institute explored the following questions:

- 01** What is the PCSO's underlying philosophy and approach to violence reduction through its focused deterrence strategy?

- 02** Does the PCSO's approach meet standards of (a) constitutional and ethical policing; (b) community engagement; and (c) data and implementation transparency?

- 03** Do the activities undertaken by the PCSO as part of its focused deterrence strategy comply with best practices?

- 04** Are the (a) resources (e.g., mental health, substance use, employment, housing) offered to the individuals on the VPO and NPO lists adequate in terms of the needs of participants, and (b) organizations providing resources/assistance engaged in the focused deterrence strategy?

- 05** Did the PCSO consult and engage with residents in the development and execution of the program?

- 06** Are there focused deterrence programs in other jurisdictions that could provide peer learning opportunities?



BACKGROUND

Deterrence theory suggests that crime can be prevented, and consequently reduced, when potential offenders perceive that the costs of committing the crime outweigh the benefits (Zimring & Hawkins, 1973). Focused deterrence policing strategies, based on deterrence theory, posit that increasing the perception of risks associated with committing crime, as well as conveying incentives and disincentives to offenders at high risk of re-offending, can lead to crime reductions (Braga & Weisburd, 2012). Focused deterrence is built on research that has found that a small group of offenders are responsible for a large proportion of crime (Wolfgang et al., 1976; Farrington & West, 1993). Focused deterrence strategies can be employed as part of problem-oriented policing initiatives, wherein a group of offenders deemed to be at high risk of re-offending are targeted to reduce the rates of a specific type of crime most affecting a jurisdiction (i.e., gang violence, firearm violence, drug proliferation, etc.).

Focused deterrence policing strategies are generally multi-faceted. As Braga and Weisburd (2012) noted, the emphasis of the focus deterrence framework is not only on increasing the perceived risk of offending but also on decreasing opportunities for violence and increasing the use of services that support desistance from crime. Together these strategies are designed to turn potential offenders away from crime, elevate collective efficacy of communities, and increase legitimacy of police actions. Moreover, focused deterrence programs are generally comprised of law enforcement, service, and community partners who work collectively to address violence at the local level. Focused deterrence programs generally include (Kennedy, 2006; Trinkner, 2019):

- 01** Increased law enforcement presence in high-crime areas or among chronic offenders;

- 02** Enhanced prosecution of specific types of crimes or offenders;

- 03** Robust social services to help individuals desist from crime;

- 04** Increased involvement of community partners directly affected by the crime(s);

- 05** Integration of researchers in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the strategy; and

- 06** Direct communication to offenders about the focused deterrence effort.

Focused deterrence strategies have been implemented in several jurisdictions (e.g., Indianapolis' Violence Reduction Partnership, McGarrell et al., 2006; Stockton's Operation Peacekeeper, Braga, 2008; Lowell's Project Safe Neighborhoods, Braga et al., 2008). One of the first programs implemented was Operation Ceasefire in



Boston during the mid 1990s. Operation Ceasefire was designed to prevent youth violence by directly reaching out to Boston's gangs to let them know that continued violence would not be tolerated, then using every legal means of enforcement available if violence continued (Kennedy et al., 1996). The premise of Operation Ceasefire, and focused deterrence strategies in general, was to warn gang members that if they did not desist from engaging in violent behavior, it would evoke immediate and intense law enforcement response, which included severe sanctions, warrants, stronger bail terms, strict probation and parole enforcement, and more severe prosecutorial attention (Braga & Weisburd, 2012). At the same time, social workers, service providers, and members of the faith community reached out to gang members to offer resources and help. Additionally, Operation Ceasefire's second component involved the focused enforcement on illicit firearm traffickers who supplied youth with firearms, by, for example, focusing on traffickers who distributed guns most often used by gang members.¹²

Another example of a focused deterrence program was Chicago's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN; Papachristos et al., 2007), which aimed to reduce gun violence. Unlike Operation Ceasefire, Chicago's PSN focused efforts on specific individuals who were most likely to be involved in firearm violence, namely, parolees with a history of gun- and gang-related offenses. Moreover, the PSN program targeted neighborhoods with disproportionately high levels of gang activity and, therefore, a higher likelihood of gun violence. The program worked by conducting monthly offender notification meetings with parolees to inform them of the legal consequences they could face if they re-engaged in criminal activity, offered social services, and provided presentations led by community members and ex-offenders on available employment opportunities in the community. The meetings were designed "to stress to offenders the consequences should they choose to pick up a gun and the choices they have to make to ensure that they do not reoffend" (Papachristos et al., 2007, pg. 231).

More recently, the city of Tampa implemented a modified PSN program to help reduce gun crime. Tampa's PSN program expanded on previous work by using a different scoring criterion to determine which offenders to target. Whereas other programs have used wider criteria – in Chicago, for example, the target group consisted of parolees with a history of gun- or gang-related violence – in Tampa, they employed a risk assessment tool, called the Violent Impact Player list (VIP list; see Uchida & Swatt, 2013 for this tool's use in Los Angeles), that consisted of a variety of evidence-based individual-level factors. The VIP list implemented in Tampa was based on risk factors weighted to reflect person-level characteristics most predictive of future offending (Fox et al., 2021). The VIP list was designed to help law enforcement identify the chronic offenders at highest risk of continued gun violence.

Tampa's VIP list worked by summing up the total points each offender received per risk factor; individuals achieving the highest scores across multiple factors (with a minimum of 25 points) were considered to have the highest likelihood of re-offending. Risk factors included prior firearm offense or arrest, gang affiliation within the

¹² youth.gov/content/operation-ceasefire-boston-mass



past five years, and probation or release from prison within the past three years (Uchida & Swatt, 2013). Upon identification, offenders who made it to the VIP list were subject to PSN efforts. The Tampa Police Department (TPD) created partnerships with federal agencies and the U.S. Attorney's Office to increase the certainty of arrest and severity of sanctions for VIP offenders who re-engaged in serious crimes (e.g., charging the offenders with federal instead of state crimes potentially resulting in longer sentences). The TPD allocated resources to enhance investigations and enforcement and advertised this change in policy through the news media as well as communications with the VIPs. TPD's focused deterrence initiatives centered on using an objective, evidence-based tool to identify individuals at highest risk of re-offending, and developing policy and collaborations aimed at deterring or incapacitating them from re-offending.

Focused deterrence strategies continue to proliferate across the country. For example, Fulton County, Georgia recently created the Repeat Offender Tracking Unit, a combined effort between the City of Atlanta, Fulton County Sheriff's Office, the Atlanta Police Department, and the Fulton District Attorney's Office. The Unit was formed to address repeat offenders, defined as those who have been convicted of three or more felonies, and estimated to be responsible for 40% of Atlanta's crime. The Unit has responsibility for tracking offenders upon arrest and working with the District Attorney's office and judges to ensure they remain in jail longer while awaiting trial. Offenders were also offered resources and services (Abusaid, 2022).

Evidence on the Effectiveness of Focused Deterrence

Evaluation research has found focused deterrence programs to be effective in reducing serious violent crime. For example, Braga and colleagues (2014) conducted a quasi-experimental evaluation of gun violence trends for Boston gangs that were subjected to Operation Ceasefire and trends for a matched comparison group of Boston gangs who were not subjected to the program. The evaluation showed that total shootings involving Boston gangs subjected to the program were reduced by 31% when compared to total shootings involving the matched comparison group. Moreover, the timing of violence reductions followed the implementation of the program. An evaluation of the PSN initiative in Chicago resulted in a 35% reduction in gun homicides for the neighborhoods targeted in the program (Papachristos et al., 2007). An evaluation of Tampa's PSN program showed that the program was associated with a statistically significant overall reduction in gun and violent crimes over a three-year period. Although the effects on crime reduction waned by the third year, the reduction was estimated to have prevented more than 250 Tampa residents from becoming victims of violence and gun crime (Fox et al., 2021). Moreover, a meta-analysis of 24 focused deterrence programs on local crime rates provided robust support for the adoption of these programs. Results from the analysis suggested a statistically significant, moderate overall effect in favor of focused deterrence strategies (Braga et al., 2018). Studies have



also found the effects of focused deterrence programs tended to diffuse. Diffusion of crime control benefits, or spillover effects, refers to the spread of the beneficial factors of a program beyond the places that were directly targeted (Clarke & Weisburd, 1994). In their meta-analysis, Braga and colleagues (2018) found that the crime control benefits of the programs tended to diffuse into neighboring areas and socially connected groups not subjected to the interventions (Braga et al., 2018).

It is important to note that whilst considerable evidence in support of focused deterrence programs has emerged, there are still gaps in the literature. First, most research is of a quasi-experimental design. True randomized controlled trials may be necessary to fully explore the impact of focused deterrence strategies (Braga & Weisburd, 2012; Braga et al., 2018). Moreover, little is known about the long-term effects of these programs; some evidence suggests strong crime reduction impacts may only be seen during short-term follow-ups (Fox & Novak, 2018; Fox et al., 2021).

Few evaluations have addressed whether the success of focused deterrence programs varies depending on specific activities and dosages. An exception was an evaluation of the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV), adopted in the mid 2000s to combat rising levels of gang-related homicides (Engel et al., 2013). Evaluation of the CIRV program activities suggested that some elements contributed more to the program's overall effectiveness. Like most focused deterrence programs, the CIRV program consisted of an enhanced enforcement component and a service provision component. For enhanced enforcement, any member of the gangs targeted for participation who were involved in violence evoked an enforcement action against the whole gang. Throughout the CIRV's 42-month evaluation period, 17 of the gangs or violent groups in the program were subjected to targeted law enforcement action and enhanced penalties, including over 300 arrests and 17 federal indictments. When such actions were taken, other gangs in the program were informed of what happened through the planned meetings with the CIRV team, which bolstered law enforcement's credibility and the certainty of action.

For the service provision component, the CIRV program operated under three approaches: 1) providing services tailored to the persons' needs, 2) conducting direct outreach through advocates to provide coaching and mentoring, and 3) violence interruption activities in neighborhoods (e.g., intervening in gang-related conflicts on the spot). Of note, service provision was for all self-selected individuals at risk of offending who wanted to receive services which included some gang members included in the CIRV program as well as others not included in the program. Additionally, the CIRV program included a component to enhance collective efficacy through community-based trainings, violence-prevention programs, and outreach efforts in neighborhoods with the highest levels of gun violence. Overall, the evaluation of the CIRV program found it to be effective in reducing city-wide gang-related homicides following its implementation – a reduction not seen in other non-gang related homicides. However, the provision of services did not have a direct impact on the violence outcomes examined. These findings indicated a need for more thorough consideration of why focused deterrence strategies work and what specific program activities and dosages are needed to achieve the intended violence reduction effects (Engel et al., 2013).



Pasco County Sheriff's Office Focused Deterrence Strategies

Capitalizing on the crime reduction evidence of focused deterrence programs and in response to Pasco County's increased rates of firearms- and opioid-related offenses, the Pasco County Sheriff's Office applied for a Strategies for Policing Innovation (SPI) grant through the Bureau of Justice and Assistance (BJA). The goal of this work was to implement a focused deterrence program to reduce violent and drug offenses. The BJA solicitation that funded this work was released in 2018. At that time, the Tampa Police Department had implemented their PSN program and preliminary results suggested positive crime reduction effects (see Fox et al., 2021). With this information, the PCSO proposed exploring two key questions:

- 01 Does the crime reduction impact of focused deterrence found in predominantly urban settings also apply to more rural settings?
 - 02 Does the use of a more structured risk scoring protocol for prioritizing people for focused deterrence improve program effectiveness?
-

Following a competitive and independent peer review process conducted by BJA, the PCSO was awarded the SPI grant in October 2018 to implement focused deterrence.¹³ Development of the Violent Prolific Offender scoring methodology was based on a data-driven risk assessment tool implemented by the Tampa Police Department (Fox et al., 2021) and the Los Angeles Police Department (Uchida & Swatt, 2013). The method was extended through the development of an additional list that aimed to identify Narcotic Prolific Offenders (detailed in the following section). The risk assessment tool adopted by PCSO to identify individuals at high risk of re-offending only considered criminal history, gang membership, suspect of victim in a shooting, involvement with drug distribution, possession, and use, and contact with PCSO deputies. On December 2, 2020, the project officially went live and the first attempt to contact active VPOs and NPOs was scheduled by PCSO detectives.

At the time of applying for and obtaining the SPI grant, the PCSO already had in place a Prolific Offender List through their Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) plan. Established in 2011, the PCSO conducted a scoring procedure to identify the "prolific offenders" responsible for majority of Pasco County's crime. For ILP purposes, the PCSO defined a prolific offender as:

A person of any age who meets or exceeds a threshold calculated by weighing his or her three-year history of arrests and suspicions for criminal offenses in Pasco County... To qualify for consideration as a prolific offender, an individual must have been arrested at least twice for [burglary, theft, violent crime]. Once qualified, individuals

¹³ SPI funding has been provided for focused deterrence strategies in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Kansas City, Missouri; Chula Vista, California; and Syracuse, New York. See www.smart-policing.com for more information.



are scored and ranked by the number and severity of offenses committed, gang affiliation, and time since most recent arrest which may diminish or increase the potential for an individual to reoffend (PCSO, 2018, pgs. 16-17).

Data from PCSO's records management system was used to identify prolific offenders. Prolific offenders were subjected to monitoring and enhanced enforcement (e.g., zero tolerance arrests, ensuring cases are prosecutable: PCSO, 2016, 2018). The ILP manual does not elaborate on which deputies were responsible for the monitoring of prolific offenders, nor how the identification and scoring information was shared among PCSO personnel.

In 2020, reporting by the *Tampa Bay Times* suggested that PCSO's ILP strategy led to unjust harassments and privacy infringements. The *Tampa Bay Times* described incidents where PCSO deputies "swarm[ed] homes in the middle of the night" and wrote tickets for minor infractions such as overgrown grass. They wrote that PCSO deputies would make "arrests for any reason they can" (McGrory & Bedi, 2020). Describing the program as unethical and ineffective, the *Tampa Bay Times* provided testimonials from Pasco County residents and previous PCSO deputies who shared their experiences undergoing or conducting the harassment. The *Tampa Bay Times* claimed that one in ten people identified for monitoring and enhanced enforcement under the ILP strategy were under the age of 18 (McGrory & Bedi, 2020).

Several lawsuits alleging unfair targeting, harassment, and warrantless arrests were filed against Sheriff Chris Nocco and the PCSO citing the ILP plan (Kates v. Nocco, 2022; Wilburn v. Nocco, 2022). For example, in March of 2022, residents filed a joint lawsuit stating that: "The [PCSO] punishes people for crimes they have not yet committed and may never commit. It first predicts that certain people may commit future crimes, and then it harasses these people—and their relatives and friends—with relentless visits to their homes at all hours of the day, with unwarranted stops and seizures, and with repeated citations for petty code violations" (Taylor v. Nocco, 2022, pg. 1).

PCSO representatives strongly contest the claims described by the *Tampa Bay Times*. Critically, the current assessment did not evaluate any aspects of the claims made by the *Tampa Bay Times*. At the time this report was written, the litigation around PCSO actions under the ILP strategy were still pending. To our knowledge, no lawsuits have been filed specifically regarding the actions taken under the SPI-funded focused deterrence program.

Differences Between ILP and SPI-Funded Approach

Considering the issues raised regarding the ILP-derived prolific offender list, BJA requested an objective, third-party assessment of the development and use of the SPI-funded focused deterrence program (the VPO and NPO lists). Because the prolific offender list under ILP and the SPI-funded focused deterrence program share important



similarities (i.e., program names, the identification of prolific offenders through scoring criteria, monitoring, and enhanced enforcement) the differences in the VPO and NPO focused deterrence strategy compared to the previous ILP prolific offender list are described below:¹⁴

- » **Connection with social services** – Under the SPI-funded work, upon notification, NPOs and VPOs were provided with a list of local social services, including mental health, substance use, housing, and job searching resources. NPOs and VPOs who were interested in pursuing the services were helped by the notifying Behavioral Health Intervention Team (BHIT) detective in making contact, otherwise they were provided with the list to make contact on their own.
- » **Notification process** – Under the SPI-funded work, NPO and VPO listees were contacted and notified by a single detective assigned to the BHIT. NPOs and VPOs who were detained at the time they were added to the prolific offender lists were notified by sheriff deputies assigned to the inner perimeter security teams. Under ILP, people identified for the prolific offender list were contacted by a variety of different deputies. Code enforcement was also used to increase sanctions.
- » **Consistency of messaging** – Under the SPI-funded work, notification was made with more structured materials and provided by the PCSO BHIT detective. Notification materials included videos depicting PCSO's sheriff, BHIT captain, and other personnel explaining the program. This was implemented to ensure that listees were given consistent information.
- » **Case management** – Each person on the VPO or NPO list was assigned to a detective. If a criminal investigation involved a listee, the investigation would involve the assigned detective.
- » **Coordinated detention strategy** – The VPO and NPO lists included people that were incarcerated at the time they qualified for inclusion on a list. People incarcerated during their list placement were offered additional services in the detention setting.¹⁵
- » **Program criteria** – The VPO and NPO lists qualifications were more limited scope of crime criteria for inclusion. As the names imply, only violent or narcotic offenses qualified an individual for inclusion in their respective lists. Moreover, people under 18 years of age were purposefully excluded from the VPO and NPO list (see Exhibits 3 and 4 for more detail on inclusion criteria).

At the time this report was written, the ILP prolific offender list was still being carried out by the PCSO, although PCSO representatives indicated that the implementation of ILP had been modified. Critically, the SPI-funded program focused on specific individuals with a history of serious violent crime and involved a limited number of PCSO detectives when carrying out contacts with listees. Moreover, whereas the ILP's definition of prolific offenders did not exclude minors, the SPI-funded program did.

¹⁴ Training materials produced by the PCSO "Narcotics & Violent Prolific Offender Program".

¹⁵ The provision of services in a correctional setting was substantially disrupted by the COVID-19 public health crisis.



ASSESSMENT METHODS

A variety of methods were used to explore the implementation of focused deterrence in the PCSO. The PCSO cooperated with all Institute requisitions including: facilitating interviews and focus groups with PCSO personnel, providing contact information for non-PCSO people that had some relation to the focused deterrence program, providing documents and general orders for review, and providing a variety of data for analytic purposes.

Interview and Focus Groups

Both in-person and virtual interviews and focus groups were conducted. As part of the review the Institute's staff met with (1) PCSO sworn and professional staff, (2) PCSO's research partner and technical assistance provider, (3) service providers, and (4) community stakeholder groups and individuals that were affected by PCSO law enforcement activities.

PCSO STAFF

Two in-person site visits were performed to meet with agency command staff, supervisors responsible for program development and implementation, and analysts responsible for preparing the focused deterrence list. Interviews and focus groups were conducted at the PCSO offices with two or three members of the research team.

EXHIBIT 1. SITE VISIT PARTICIPANTS

| SITE VISIT | PARTICIPANTS |
|--------------|---|
| Site visit 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheriff • Chief Deputy • Major, Future Operations Bureau • Major, Investigations and Criminal Intelligence Bureau • Captains, Special Investigations Bureau • Captain, Behavioral Health Unit • Inspector of Intelligence-Led Policing • Criminal Intelligence Analyst |
| Site visit 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureau Chief, Community Engagement Bureau • Criminal Intelligence Analyst • Behavioral Health Intervention Team (BHIT) Detective |



RESEARCH PARTNERS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Dr. Bryanna Fox, University of South Florida, was the research partner for PCSO's implementation of the SPI-funded focused deterrence program.¹⁶ A series of virtual meetings were held with Dr. Fox to understand the project background and development, implementation, and evaluation strategy. Dr. Fox shared a variety of information related to the project including the evidence base used to develop the risk scoring methodology.

CNA was the technical assistance provider provided by BJA to support PCSO's focused deterrence strategy. CNA provided expert review and feedback¹⁷ on the action and evaluation plan prior to implementation. The Institute reviewed CNA's written feedback on the PCSO action plan and PCSO's responses to the independent BJA proposal peer review process.

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Community stakeholders were recruited in two ways. First, the Institute reached out to the Pasco Coalition, a local community group comprised of "over 90 individual members and over 30 local, state, and national organizational members."¹⁸ Second, the PCSO's Community Engagement Bureau provided the Institute with contact information of community organizations that had collaborated with the PCSO. The Institute met with the Coalition to discuss the assessment's aims, procedures for obtaining community input, and the request to connect us to community members affected by PCSO's focused deterrence strategies. Despite multiple outreach attempts, in total, the Institute met with four community stakeholders provided by the PCSO, and three community members who attended an open session facilitated by the Pasco Coalition.

Interviews with community stakeholders were conducted by Institute staff; no PCSO staff were present, and they were not notified of who agreed to participate. Interviews began by providing participants with background information on the assessment's purpose and were followed by a few semi-structured questions to gauge participants': (1) understanding of focused deterrence, (2) understanding of what PCSO has done as part of their focused deterrence strategies, (3) thoughts of PCSO's use of focused deterrence, (4) perceptions of whether the PCSO's focused deterrence strategies involved the provision of services, (5) knowledge of whether PCSO sought out community input during the planning of the SPI-funded focused deterrence strategies, (6) knowledge of mechanisms set in place for the community to provide feedback to the PCSO, (7) perceptions of whether the community felt like an active partner in the crime prevention strategies, and (8) perceptions of discrimination in the implementation of the SPI-funded focused deterrence.

¹⁶ Dr. Fox was not associated with PCSO's ILP program implementation.

¹⁷ Expert review of the PCSO action and evaluation plan was provided by Gary Cordner, PhD; Scott Decker, PhD; Ken Novak, PhD; and Tom Woodmansee.

¹⁸ www.splcenter.org/PASCOcoalition#about_the_pasco_coalition



SERVICE PROVIDERS

The Institute met with two members from Pasco County's Community Services and Pasco County HUB Model. The HUB functions as a central registry of at-risk individuals for a network of care coordination agencies, including community-based organizations, service providers, and hospitals. The HUB's purpose is to connect individuals who are having difficulty navigating the system or finding resources or an agency to the services most appropriate to help them. As part of the SPI-funded focused deterrence program, the HUB's role was to facilitate the service referral component of the program. Interviews with community stakeholders were conducted by Institute staff; no PCSO staff were present, and they were not notified of who agreed to participate. Interviews began by providing participants with background information on the assessment's purpose and were followed by a few semi-structured questions to gauge participants': (1) understanding of focused deterrence, (2) understanding of what PCSO has done as part of their focused deterrence strategies, (3) thoughts of PCSO's use of focused deterrence, (4) describing the HUB's referral process, and (5) how the partnership with the PCSO worked.

Data and Document Review

The PCSO provided materials documenting training, notification content, monthly lists of prioritized offenders, and supporting documentation (**Exhibit 2**). CNA provided additional documentation on the originally proposed work plan, feedback provided by subject matter experts, revisions by PCSO based on that feedback, and a final approved work plan. We conducted additional searches of open-source material including news and other popular media. All documents were reviewed by the Institute's team. Where necessary, data were extracted and coded from documents to facilitate quantitative and qualitative analyses.


EXHIBIT 2. DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY PCSO

| DOCUMENT TOPIC | DESCRIPTION |
|------------------------|---|
| Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint training materials for BHIT, Special Investigations Unit (SIU), and vice-narcotics detectives • PowerPoint training for detention center deputies • Training video for patrol deputies, November 18, 2020 • Training video for detention center deputies, November 16, 2020 |
| Notification Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification video • Notification letter, February 15, 2021 • Contact card • Resource guide, 2021 • Detention center resource guide (for notifications made while person was incarcerated), November 11, 2020 |
| Lists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violent prolific offender list, by month from October 2020-August 2021 • Narcotic prolific offender list, by month from October 2020-August 2021 • VPO and NPO list activity, by month from October 2020-August 2021 • Meeting summary of PVO individuals on list • Document with more detail on background and timeline for individual • Individual workup document |
| Other Documents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jail resource tracking • HUB activity tracking • Authorization to use or disclose protected health information form • Original SPI action plan, expert review comments, and final SPI action plan, July 31, 2019 • SPI grant timeline and events |

Note: Documents were provided by the PCSO between January and April 2022. Most documents were not dated, except those described in the table.



ASSESSMENT RESULTS

This section documents program development and operationalization, implementation, and evaluation. Differences between the SPI-funded focused deterrence strategy and other prolific offender strategies are described.

Description of VPO and NPO Program

The PCSO focused deterrence program included deputy and detective training, development of outreach materials, risk assessment methodology and implementation, notification implementation, and plans for a robust outcome evaluation.

OUTREACH MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

Notification Letter – A notification letter was developed from notification letters implemented by other law enforcement agencies that had implemented similar focused deterrence programs. The notification letter was reviewed by PCSO's experts at CNA (Appendix I). The letter was revised based on this feedback.

Notification Video – A notification video was developed by PCSO staff. The goal of this video was to ensure that information about the program was being delivered in a consistent manner. The video went through multiple rounds of expert review. Development of the video was substantially altered in response to the murder of George Floyd. Mr. Floyd's murder, and renewed calls for police reform, resulted in changes to the messaging contained in the video. More emphasis was placed on the resources available to support the desistance from crime rather than on more aggressive policing tactics.

Resource Guide – A resource guide was curated by the PCSO (Appendix II). The resource guide included services for assistance with substance and alcohol abuse, housing, employment, and mental and physical health across Pasco County and neighboring jurisdictions. Upon notification of inclusion to the program, VPOs and NPOs were provided with a physical copy of the resource guide. If upon notification, individuals were interested in a specific service, a detective would assist them with making the initial contact.

Contact Card – VPOs and NPOs who expressed interest in social services were asked to fill in a contact card with contact information and the types of services they were interested in receiving (i.e., substance use, domestic violence, housing, education, financial, etc.). Contact cards were then forward by the PSCO to the Pasco County's HUB for HUB personnel to directly reach out and coordinate signing up for the requested services.



RISK ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The VPO scoring was based on the risk assessment tool used in Tampa's PSN program (called the VIP list in Tampa) and included characteristics such as arrest history, gang member affiliation, and contacts with law enforcement (**Exhibit 3**).

EXHIBIT 3. RISK SCORING, VIOLENT PROLIFIC OFFENDER LIST

| FACTOR | POINT VALUE |
|---|-------------|
| Prior firearm offense/arrest within the past two years ¹⁹ | 5 |
| Violent criminal history within the past two years | 5 |
| Gang member/affiliation within the past five years ²⁰ | 5 |
| Probation or release from prison within the past three years | 5 |
| Suspect in a shooting within the past two years | 5 |
| Associate of the suspect in shooting | 3 |
| Victim in a shooting | 1 |
| Quality contacts with police within the past two years (points per contact) | 1 |

Independent research has found that these characteristics are associated with an increased risk of violent and firearm offending (Scott, 2017; Papachristos et al., 2015; Wheeler et al., 2019). For example, there is evidence to suggest that there is large overlap between people who have been the victim of a shooting and people who commit a shooting (Jennings et al., 2012). The retrospective length was limited to behaviors committed within the past two years to identify offenders currently at highest risk of re-offending (Fox et al., 2021). The NPO list used a similar scoring methodology but emphasized different characteristics as described in **Exhibit 4**. Points were assigned for previous drug arrests, violent offenses, presence at places where a search warrant was executed, and overdoses. To reach VPO or NPO status, individuals had to score across the multiple factors to obtain the minimum of 15 points.

¹⁹ Criminal involvement for risk scoring purposes was derived from PCSO's records management system. Because of this approach, it only includes incident and arrests occurring within the county.

²⁰ Criminal street gang is defined by Florida State Statute 874.03. See www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0800-0899/0874/Sections/0874.03.html


EXHIBIT 4. RISK SCORING, NARCOTIC PROLIFIC OFFENDER LIST

| FACTOR | POINT VALUE |
|--|-------------|
| Prior arrest for an offense involving opioids within the past two years | 5 |
| Prior arrest for trafficking illegal narcotics within the past two years | 5 |
| Prior arrest for a violent crime within the past two years | 5 |
| Prior felony arrest for sale, manufacture, delivery/possession of illegal substances within the past two years | 3 |
| The subject of a search warrant for potential illegal drug offense within the past two years | 3 |
| Presence at a search warrant location | 1 |
| The subject of an illicit drug overdose within the past two years (points per occurrence) | 1 |
| Quality contacts with police within the past two years (points per contact) | 1 |

Additionally, scoring for inclusion on the NPO list included measures of social networking with other known and suspected drug users and distributors. The goal of the social network analysis (SNA) was to identify leaders, pending leaders, and people that bridge groups of drug distribution. SNA was limited to people that scored at least 10 points on other measures. Networks were established via official agency data including people stopped together, people arrested for the same incident, and people present when search warrants were executed. Points were assigned for different types of associations identified by the SNA ([Exhibit 5](#)).

EXHIBIT 5. RISK SCORING, NARCOTIC PROLIFIC OFFENDER LIST, SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

| FACTOR | POINT VALUE |
|--------------------|-------------|
| High level leaders | 5 |
| Emerging leaders | 5 |
| Gatekeepers | 5 |
| Boundary spanners | 5 |



During the first week of each month, the project analyst would identify new people to add to the NPO or VPO list,²¹ review status of people already on the list, and develop briefing documentation on listee status. Inclusion on the list required a person to score 15 or more points. Potential new listees were submitted to supervisors in investigations to make sure that no active investigation of the individual was ongoing. People that were under active investigations were suppressed from the list. People that were included on the list were assigned to a detective that would serve as the main contact if that person encountered deputies during stops or investigations.

Once these verifications were complete, list membership was provided to the BHIT team monthly. People on the list were flagged in the PCSO's internal records management system (RMS). If a deputy searched for a person on the focused deterrence list, their record would return with a note that they should contact the person's assigned detective. Additional information, however, was intentionally limited. The RMS did not provide information about why the detective should be contacted nor did it include information on the VPO or NPO status.

DEPUTY AND DETECTIVE TRAINING

Patrol deputies and others that were not directly involved in the program received a training that covered the goals of the program, differences from past ILP efforts, and what to do if they encounter a VPO or NPO listee during routine policing activity. The training was conducted by the Captain (at the time) of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU). They were not given access to the complete list of people included on either list. Their role was only to notify the responsible detective if they had incidental contact with a person on the prolific violent or narcotic offenders list. This would only be identifiable after running a person's name through the RMS. This was done to reduce the chance that listees would be targeted for excessive enforcement efforts.

VPO AND NPO LISTEE NOTIFICATION STRATEGY

Notification was delivered by a detective assigned to BHIT. All notifications made until the time the project was put on hold were conducted by one detective. PCSO indicated that their decision to use one detective to make all notifications was to ensure consistency in how the process was applied. In general, notifications were done at individual's home however PCSO staff reported that locating a person was frequently challenging. When needed, additional tracing was done to locate the listee. This may have involved contact with relatives or other known associates and multiple visits to the person's last known address.

Once contact was made, the BHIT detective took several actions including: (1) explaining the purpose of the visit (2) providing the written notification letter (see Appendix I), (3) played a video describing the program, (4) provided a list of available community support resources, and (5) contact information for PCSO staff if more information was needed.

²¹ People that were eligible for inclusion on both the VPO and NPO list were included on the VPO list.



EVALUATION

Dr. Bryanna Fox, University of South Florida, was PCSO's research partner for SPI-funded project activities. Previous work done by Dr. Fox in Tampa and other Florida Jurisdictions served as the basis for the development of the focused deterrence strategy, scoring metrics, and evaluation framework. A primary evaluation component included a survey of people included on the VPO or NPO list. The survey covered a variety of topics and was primarily designed to assess if perceptions of law enforcement or perceptions associated with the risk of offending changed after being placed on the list. Surveys were primarily conducted by the research team in person. PCSO representatives were not present during any of the data collections. Phone survey data collection was attempted but determined to not be very effective due to unreliable contact information. Some interviews were conducted with people detained at the PCSO jail but scheduled for release. At the time this report was written, survey data were unavailable for review due to the work-stop-order issued by BJA.

Characteristics of People Identified for Focused Deterrence

As part of this assessment, each monthly VPO and NPO list was reviewed and aggregated to produce a single longitudinal panel dataset of every listee. From each monthly list we extracted the person's name, identifier, race, ethnicity, sex, and which list they were included on. A total of 128 unique individuals were identified. All identified individuals met the scoring threshold for inclusion into the program (i.e., 15 points or higher), however, 27 individuals remained inactive on the lists, meaning they were excluded from the focused deterrence efforts. Individuals were excluded from the focused deterrence strategies if they were under the age of 18, if they were residing outside of the county, and if they were undergoing an active investigation. In total, 101 unique individuals were included on the VPO or NPO lists.²² **Exhibit 6** provides information on the race, ethnicity, and sex composition of included individuals and benchmarks against residential population data reported for Pasco County by the US Census.

²² Two people were on both the VPO and NPO lists. For reporting purposes, they are listed once under the VPO list.


EXHIBIT 6. DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF LISTEES

| CHARACTERISTIC | OVERALL N (%) | % ON LIST VPO N (%) | NPO N (%) | % DEMO- GRAPHIC IN PASCO COUNTY |
|------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------------|--|
| Total Population | 101 | 73 (72.3) | 28 (27.7) | 584,067 |
| Race¹ | | | | |
| White | 86 (85.1) | 61 (83.6) | 25 (89.3) | 424,617 (91.5) ² |
| Black | 15 (14.9) | 12 (16.4) | 3 (10.7) | 39,132 (8.5) ³ |
| Ethnicity⁴ | | | | |
| Not Hispanic or Latino | 79 (78.2) | 57 (78.1) | 22 (78.6) | |
| Hispanic or Latino | 22 (21.8) | 16 (21.9) | 6 (21.4) | 96,371 (16.5) |
| Sex | | | | |
| Female | 6 (5.9) | 3 (4.1) | 3 (10.7) | 300,210 (51.4) |
| Male | 95 (94.1) | 70 (95.9) | 25 (89.3) | 283,857 (48.6) |

Note: Residential population data from the US Census 2021 American Community Survey estimates for Pasco County. 1. VPO and NPO lists included a race indicator of White and Black only, no other races were reported. 2. White alone, not Hispanic or Latino. 3. White and Black people represent 72.7% and 6.7% of the Pasco County population respectively when calculating percentages including other demographics not recorded by PCSO, such as mixed race. To compare PCSO demographics to the census data, we calculated proportions for White and Black only. 4. VPO and NPO lists included an ethnicity indicator of Hispanic only. VPO = Violent prolific offender; NPO = Narcotic prolific offender.

Exhibit 6 should be interpreted with caution. First, there are well known challenges of using population data as a benchmark for assessing disparity in policing activity (see Footnote 2). Second, the total number of people included on a focused deterrence list is low. This means that even small changes can substantially alter the composition of the list and comparison to overall Pasco County population.

PCSO Contacts with VPO and NPO Listees

We examined the number of official contacts made by PCSO to VPO and NPO listees. This was undertaken to understand if being on the list subjected listees to more extensive police contacts. Each person included on the VPO or NPO list was run through PCSOs records management system. Monthly counts for arrests, traffic stops, and pedestrian stops for each listee were collected for the 24 months between January 2020 and December 2021 (the program start date was December 2020). **Exhibit 7** reports the counts of contacts between PCSO



deputies and people on the VPO or NPO list. Overall, enforcement contact between listees and PCSO were rare, however, police contacts were lower when individuals were identified for focused deterrence. Looking at a 2-year window for each person (12 months prior to first time on list, and 12 months after), 60% of people had 3 contacts or less with PCSO. During the time on VPO or NPO list, over 74% of individuals had no contact with PCSO at all.

EXHIBIT 7. COUNT OF PCSO CONTACTS FOR VPOS AND NPOS COMBINED

| NUMBER OF CONTACTS | ARRESTS (PER MONTH) | TRAFFIC STOPS (PER MONTH) | PEDESTRIAN STOPS (PER MONTH) | TOTAL CONTACTS ¹ (PER MONTH) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| While on VPO or NPO list | 0.066 | 0.002 | 0.008 | 0.076 |
| While not on VPO or NPO lists | 0.126 | 0.016 | 0.011 | 0.154 |

Note: Number of contacts recorded between PCSO deputies and people included on the violent or narcotic prolific offender list in the 24 months between January 2020 and December 2021. Count does not include contact by other law enforcement agencies, nor does it account for time that may have been spent incarcerated. Total contacts is comprised of arrests, traffic stops, and pedestrian stops combined.

We took advantage of the longitudinal panel dataset to explore changes in PCSO contact before, during, and after list involvement using a series of generalized linear mixed-effects regression models (Exhibit 8). Due to the limited range in the number of contacts, the outcome variable was dichotomized to a binary monthly indicator if there was contact between the PCSO and a listee, or not. AIC and BIC values were used for model comparison. Model 2 had the lowest AIC and BIC values indicating that it was the most parsimonious and best fitting model.

EXHIBIT 8. GENERALIZED LINEAR MIXED EFFECTS MODELS, COUNT OF PCSO CONTACTS

| | MODEL 1 | MODEL 2 | MODEL 3 | MODEL 4 |
|-------------------------|---------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Level-1 | | | | |
| Time | -- | -0.05*** | -0.05*** | -0.05*** |
| List (VPO and NPO) | -- | -0.36 [†] | -0.36 [†] | -0.20 |
| Level-2 | | | | |
| White Non-Hispanic | -- | -- | 0.00 | 0.04 |
| List*White Non-Hispanic | -- | -- | -- | -0.26 |
| AIC | 1740.14 | 1708.32 | 1715.64 | 1717.30 |
| BIC | 1751.73 | 1731.49 | 1756.19 | 1763.64 |

*Note: ***p < .001. [†]p = .06. List factors were dummy coded as: Off (0) and On (1). Race and ethnicity factors were dummy coded as White Non-Hispanic (1) and Non-White or Hispanic (0).*



Enforcement contacts (arrests, traffic stops, and pedestrian stops combined) decreased over time. People included for focused deterrence were less likely to have contact with PCSO while on a focused deterrence list, but the trend was not statistically significant. Neither race/ethnicity nor the interaction of race/ethnicity and list status were associated with the likelihood of PCSO enforcement contacts.

Community Perspectives

Despite a variety of outreach efforts, our ability to gather direct community feedback on the SPI-funded focused deterrence program was limited. The perspectives reported in this section were based on a limited number of participants that elected to participate in interviews or focus groups. We also note that, to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants, we were unable to independently verify the veracity of information provided.

Overall, community stakeholders were not generally aware of what strategies were involved in the SPI-funded focused deterrence program. Some community stakeholders described focused deterrence to involve community engagement broadly, and others believed it was largely about monitoring of offenders with the goal of identifying more criminal behavior. One participant described the program as the provision of services to criminally involved individuals with substance use issues. A couple of community members only knew of PCSO's initiatives from the *Tampa Bay Times's* investigation (i.e., McGrory & Bedi, 2020). However, none felt sure of the specifics of the program, its selection criteria, nor what differentiated the SPI-funded work from previous ILP initiatives.

More broadly, the community's support for PCSO's use of a focused deterrence strategy was mixed. Stakeholders who worked with the PCSO on initiatives related to the prevention and reduction of substance use and mental health issues in Pasco County were generally positive in their view of the initiative. These stakeholders felt that the PCSO was an active member of the recovery community, and whilst not understanding well what the SPI-funded work entailed, they supported PCSO's effort to provide enhanced services that would facilitate desistance from crime. Other community members were apprehensive of any initiative that involved the monitoring of individual's records and expressed concerns around privacy and harassment. These were consistent with the original concerns that led to the present assessment. One participant believed their family was targeted due to having a criminal record and unfairly detained after a traffic stop. This participant also shared that, while they were given a list of services, they would never consider taking resources provided by the PCSO because they believed it could be used against them.

Regarding thoughts on whether the community felt like a partner in crime prevention strategies, there was a clear distinction between stakeholders from the service provider field and community members who were not involved in service provider organizations. The former felt that the PCSO made active efforts in engaging with their organizations to tackle issues related to substance use and mental health. They also described the PCSO as being responsive to community feedback, as one participant explained: "[PCSO representatives] are



at our meetings, they hear our people, they participate in our panels. Their engagement with the community is there, someone is always readily accessible." However, community members noted that PCSO's community engagement was selective, and that most regular residents would not feel like active partners, as one participant stated: "I think it comes back to even their slogan, 'we fight as one' they didn't mean the citizens by the way they actually meant community leaders." Some participants also remarked on the PCSO's recent deactivation of comments on their social media platform as a sign of discouraging community feedback.

We again note that the limited number of participating community stakeholders interviewed for this assessment (four referred by PCSO and three referred by the Pasco Coalition) may limit the generalizability of the findings.

Service Providers

Representatives from the HUB were not aware of the SPI-funded focused deterrence program or what focused deterrence strategies typically involved. However, they explained that the HUB served as a connecting entity between individuals referred by the PCSO and the local service providers. When individuals are referred to them there is little identifying information provided by the PCSO besides contact information and whether the individual has a criminal record. Referral to the HUB is contingent upon the person providing consent. The HUB keeps a log of individuals referred by the PCSO but not whether they formed part of a particular program or initiative. Representatives from the HUB explained that all referrals thus far came from the PCSO's BHIT, but that they generally only received one to two referrals per month. They further explained that PCSO's BHIT typically tries to connect individuals directly to services before referring them to the HUB. Indeed, PCSO personnel indicated that in some situations the assigned BHIT detective would work directly with service providers if the person

Enforcement contacts (arrests, traffic stops, and pedestrian stops combined) decreased over time.

on the NPO or VPO list needed immediate assistance or special travel assistance. Individuals referred by the PCSO to the HUB typically needed assistance in securing stable housing.

HUB representatives explained that there are limited resources and services in Pasco County. As an example, they described an instance in which an individual was recently connected to a temporary housing service by

the HUB, but the service could not accommodate them due to lack of space. Moreover, some services may not be available to individuals with a criminal record. Nonetheless, the HUB representatives believed that they could help the individual find a service regardless of their criminal involvement.

Review of the HUB's activity tracking document (provided by the PCSO) indicated 15 VPOs or NPOs were identified for assistance and attempts to contact them were made throughout the duration of the SPI-funded



program. Notes from the tracking document pointed to a general difficulty in contacting individuals. The tracking document did not indicate if the person successfully received services. Importantly, the first outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic began just months after the program, which substantially impacted PCSO and the HUB's capacity for engagement with VPOs and NPOs.



DISCUSSION

The goal of this work was to assess the design and implementation of PCSO's focused deterrence strategy that was developed and implemented with SPI funding provided by BJA. BJA and other stakeholders were interested in determining if PCSO's focused deterrence strategy was being carried out in a way that was aligned with the evidence-base for best practices and implemented in a way that minimized racial or ethnic disparities. To address these issues a variety of methods were used: interviews and focus groups with agency representatives, community groups, and impacted individuals; methodology review; and data analysis. In addressing these issues, we return to the questions that guided this evaluation.

01 What is the PCSO's underlying philosophy and approach to violence reduction through its focused deterrence strategy?

The PCSO focused deterrence strategy documents enhanced enforcement, close collaboration with other criminal justice system components, and the provision of services. Documentation of PCSO's approach to focused deterrence can be found in the SPI Action Plan.

PCSO intends to have an impact on violence, firearms offenses, and opioid-related crime in Pasco County by ensuring thorough, proactive investigations on those identified with the highest risk of being prolific violent and narcotics offenders based upon evidence-based risk factors stemming from their prior behavior and criminal activity. To do this, PCSO will implement an [Focused Deterrence] strategy that aims to alter the perception of risk by increasing the certainty, swiftness, and severity of punishment that comes with committing criminal activity, particularly among those identified as prolific violent and narcotics offenders. These FD programs will draw upon a collaborative task force of law enforcement practitioners, prosecutors, and researchers to identify high-risk prolific offenders, develop specialized proactive policing strategies, and enhance sanctions and enforcement policies in order to incentivize offenders (using the proverbial "carrot or stick" approach) to discontinue their criminal behavior.²³

Integration of the provision of social services was described as: PCSO "will obtain contact information, which will be forwarded to a Pasco County Community Engagement Services Specialist to connect all willing VPOs and NPOs to available health and social services within the community. This follow-up contact will be made via phone and/or email after the subject has expressed interested in seeking assistance to abandon their criminal lifestyle."²⁴

²³ PCSO SPI Action Plan, page 26.

²⁴ PCSO SPI Action Plan page 26.



The PCSO strategy involves collaboration with other organizations in the criminal justice system. The Action Plan describes several essential partnerships and regular status updates:

In addition to efforts by PCSO in terms of added investigative and analytical work to identify and build cases against prolific offenders who commit future crimes, PSO will also benefit from collaborative outreach efforts with the State Attorney's Office (SAO) and U.S. State Attorney's Office (USAO) to help ensure cases will be prosecuted to the fullest extent, when possible. Specifically, PSO will coordinate with Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) to ensure investigations involving these offenders are successfully processed in both state and federal court. PSN Coordinator Chris Murray, who is with the USAO in Florida's Middle District in Tampa, has committed his cooperation to PSO's FD effort. Additionally, PSO will participate in actionable intelligence meetings at the SAO and USAO to provide information to prosecutors and neighboring agencies related to the arrest history and criminal incidents involving prolific offenders identified through this project. Finally, PSO command staff will be engaged in the program through weekly, monthly, and quarterly Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) meetings.²⁵

02 Does the PCSO's approach meet standards of (a) constitutional and ethical policing; (b) community engagement; and (c) data and implementation transparency?

We examined whether listees' status led to higher rates of police-initiated contacts, namely arrests, traffic stops, and pedestrian stops. We found no evidence that inclusion on either the VPO or NPO list increased enforcement contact between people identified for focused deterrence and PCSO personnel. Rather, we found that enforcement contacts tended to be lower when listees were on the lists. These results suggest that the program may be having a deterrent effect and generating reduced criminal activity. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that these results are preliminary and firm conclusions of program effectiveness should rely on a more comprehensive outcome assessment.

We explored if the SPI-funded program was done in a way that disproportionality affected people of color. At an aggregate level, we found that Black people were somewhat over-represented on the VPO (16.4%) and NPO (10.7%) lists relative to their proportion of the residential population in Pasco County (8.5%), though the small number of listees means that this finding must be interpreted with caution. Even small changes in list composition would meaningfully change this relationship. To further explore the role of race in understanding police contacts with people on a prioritized list, we included race and ethnicity as a factor in our statistical models. There was no evidence that race, or the interaction of race and list status, affected the likelihood of enforcement contacts. Together, these models suggest that Black and Hispanic people included on a focused deterrence list were no more likely to be subject to an enforcement action than White listees.

There was little evidence that PCSO made a concerted effort to be transparent with the community about the

²⁵ PCSO SPI Action Plan, page 28.



SPI-funded focused deterrence program during the time the program was live (December 2020-August 2021). Information about the program was published on the PCSO website, but information was not shared through other channels (e.g., social media, public announcements). PCSO representatives reported that they were discussing a dissemination strategy with subject matter experts, but the plan was put on hold due to the stop-work order. However, we must also recognize that PCSO fully cooperated with this assessment by arranging interviews and focus groups with staff, providing program information and documentation, and providing data necessary to assess implementation and impact of the focused deterrence strategy.

There was also relatively little interaction between PCSO and other organizations within the criminal justice system. This seems to at least partially be attributable to the relatively limited implementation of the focused deterrence strategy. The implementation timeline, the COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent stop-work order meant that few people prioritized for focused deterrence had any official contacts with PCSO deputies.

03 Do the activities undertaken by the PCSO as part of its focused deterrence strategy comply with best practices?

Considering the studies conducted over time and across a variety of locations and jurisdictions, there is strong evidence that focused deterrence strategies are effective in reducing crime and offending. Research has found a robust crime reduction effect of focused deterrence strategy and even a diffusion of benefits for people that were not directly involved in the focused deterrence efforts. The demonstrated effectiveness of focused deterrence strategies suggests reason for optimism about the crime prevention effects of the PCSO strategy.

Focused deterrence programs are tailored to jurisdiction specific context, however, they generally include: (1) increased law enforcement presence in high-crime areas or among chronic offenders; (2) enhanced prosecution of specific types of crimes or offenders; (3) robust social services to help individuals desist from a life of crime; (4) increased involvement of community partners directly affected by the crime(s); (5) integration of researchers in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the strategy; and (6) direct communication to offenders about the focused deterrence effort (Trinkner, 2019). The focused deterrence strategy implemented by PCSO incorporated, to varying degrees, many of these elements.

Looking specifically at programs that directly parallel PCSO's implementation, the evidence is promising but less robust. A majority of focused deterrence programs implemented and evaluated thus far have focused on groups rather than individuals; evidence suggest that the crime prevention effectiveness of group-based focused deterrence programs has been found to be stronger than those focused on high-risk individuals likely to re-offend (Braga et al., 2018).

Moreover, focused deterrence programs typically have a primary emphasis on the enhanced enforcement aspect,



using tactics to create actual, or perceived, changes in the way prolific offenders are handled by the criminal justice system (e.g., more strict sanctions, upgrading charges to federal level). The strategy implemented by the PCSO focused primarily on the service provision aspect, which has less empirical support available due to the generally low participation rates by the targeted offenders (see Engel et al., 2013). Despite these commonalities, it is common for focused deterrence programs to vary in specific program elements.²⁶ Existing research has not fully disaggregated the specific components of focused deterrence programs necessary to achieve a crime reduction impact (Engel et al., 2013). It is also unclear to what extent specific program elements, such as focusing on gangs instead of individuals, results in unwanted or negative side effects such as racial or ethnic disparities.

Nevertheless, many criminal justice programs are implemented with little or no evidence base. Therefore, it appears reasonable to conclude that the strategy implemented by the PCSO is at least promising based on the available evidence. Our review identified several challenges the PCSO faced in implementing best practices for focused deterrence. This included:

Stop-work order – In order to ensure that PCSO was conducting their focused deterrence strategy in a way that was consistent with best practices, BJA issued a stop-work order to allow time for the external review conducted by the Institute. The stop-work order was issued only six months after the program began. The stop-work order limited the ability for PCSO to engage in ongoing evaluations of their work and adjusting as needed. For example, according to PCSO personnel, right before the stop-work order, they were in the process of adding a designated case manager to manage service intakes and referrals for all VPOs and NPOs who requested social services. Importantly, the stop-work order prevented continued follow-up with people included on the VPO and NPO lists, which was scheduled for every three months.

Treatment dosage – Interviews with PCSO personnel raised questions about whether the dosage of the treatment was sufficient to develop the relationships necessary to facilitate desistance from crime. Program staff noted that with the available resources, they were only able to contact people one or two times (typically once when added to the list to provide the notification and once after six months) during the duration of the program. As expected, program staff reported that many people prioritized for focused deterrence were not receptive to exploring or using services. The limited staff time available for follow-up contact hindered attempts at repeated contacts that may have secured further engagement (see Delaney, 2006 for similar limitations in Rochester's Operation Ceasefire). Program staff noted that helping people to reach a turning point away from crime often requires multiple visits and sustained efforts to build a relationship. Ultimately, it is beyond the scope of this review to determine if the treatment dosage was sufficient to make an impact; PCSO's research partner would be able to explore this issue more directly. Nevertheless, there is at least reason to believe that the treatment dosage, and level of contact between PCSO program staff and people identified for focused deterrence may be limited in generating long-term change.

²⁶ For a comparison of focused deterrence programs in published research see: www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL261/better-policing-toolkit/all-strategies/focused-deterrence/in-depth.html



Limited engagement with external partners – The PCSO Action Plan describes the need for partnerships with a variety of criminal justice system partners including district and federal prosecutors. There was little evidence of this occurring. Part of this may be explained by the relatively short implementation timeline, infrequent contact between PCSO and people prioritized for focused deterrence, the limited time available for case management, or the social and public health conditions while the program was implemented. A more complete implementation evaluation will be essential to understanding the fidelity to which the program was implemented.

Certainty of punishment – Central to the success of focused deterrence strategies is the ability to change individuals' perceptions of the certainty of sanctions if they do not desist from crime. To do this, programs enhance enforcement actions toward selected individuals or groups, and when taken, such actions are communicated to individuals in the program (e.g., Chicago's PSN; Trinkner, 2019). The PCSO initiative did not emphasize certainty of punishment in this manner. For instance, the initial notification letter stated the following: "If you choose not to get help, you will be the focal point of further focused law enforcement and full prosecution should you continue with your criminal activities." This language, although alerting of the focused action, may not be perceived as indicating an enhancement or change in how PCSO has enforced in the past, nor does it provide tangible examples that reinforce punishment certainty. The difficulty the assigned detectives had in locating the individuals for follow-up meetings also likely contributed to limited messaging regarding the certainty of punishment.

- 04** Are the (a) resources (e.g., mental health, substance use, employment, housing) offered to the individuals on the VPO and NPO lists adequate in terms of the needs of participants, and (b) organizations providing resources/assistance engaged in the focused deterrence strategy?

The lack of mental healthcare and drug and alcohol addiction treatment is a pervasive problem in many jurisdictions. Pasco County is no exception and program staff noted that the ability to provide resources to people prioritized for focused deterrence was limited. This challenge was from both shorter-term issues (such as the public health crisis generated by COVID-19) and longer-term issues around resource investment in treatment services. Discussions with social service providers identified additional challenges. In some instances, the service provider rules restricted participant eligibility for those that were currently involved with the criminal justice system (e.g., on probation or parole). The limited ability to provide services may undermine the effectiveness of a focused deterrence strategy and speaks to the overall difficulty of implementing the service provision component in more rural settings. The Pasco County HUB confirmed the overall limited resource availability in Pasco County. Moreover, the HUB and other community service organizations reported little knowledge about PCSO's use of focused deterrence (although they were positive about PCSO's overall engagement efforts with the service community), indicating room for improved engagement at the planning and implementation phases.



Worden et al. (2021) noted similar issues when assessing a focused deterrence program in Syracuse, New York. Over 60% of focused deterrence partners reported feeling as though other partners could improve efforts to improve offender accountability.

Prior to the stop-work order issued by BJA, the PCSO was planning on hiring a dedicated case manager to better facilitate access to available resources. The case manager would be responsible for coordinating intake and referral efforts for people identified on the VPO or NPO lists. The ability to hire a case manager was delayed due to the stop-work order.

05 Did the PCSO consult and engage with residents in the development and execution of the program?

The PCSO focused deterrence program had little direct community engagement either regarding program development or program implementation. Focused deterrence in other jurisdictions has involved greater involvement from community and community groups. For example, Chicago's PSN program included forums with the prioritized parolees as well as community members from organizations that represent employment and service options. Moreover, enhancing the community's collective efficacy has been a program goal in other jurisdictions as well (e.g., Boston's Operation Ceasefire, Cincinnati's CIRV), wherein the communities most affected by violence are empowered to take social control against continued offending through collective action. There was little evidence that PCSO engaged with community members or groups to build a coalition around facilitating desistance from crime. Moreover, community stakeholders' general lack of understanding of what focused deterrence entails, coupled with the concerns voiced regarding PCSO's previous ILP plan as well as the SPI-funded focused deterrence program reported in previous news reports, suggests a need for more active information sharing and collaboration.

06 Are there focused deterrence programs in other jurisdictions that could provide peer learning opportunities?

SPI-funded focused deterrence projects have been implemented in Cambridge, Massachusetts;²⁷ Kansas City, Missouri;²⁸ Chula Vista, California;²⁹ and Syracuse, New York.³⁰ Each program had differences from the PCSO implementation but can provide helpful learning opportunities. In Cambridge, for example, a much more intensive case management approach was adopted. This allowed for the development of customized treatment

27 www.smart-policing.com/index.php/spi-sites/cambridge-massachusetts-2011

28 www.smart-policing.com/spi-sites/kansas-city-missouri-2012

29 www.smart-policing.com/spi-sites/chula-vista-california-2013

30 www.smart-policing.com/spi-sites/syracuse-new-york-2017



strategies. In Kansas City, the program appeared to be highly effective in connecting people prioritized for focused deterrence with social service providers. Almost 70% had an initial meeting with service providers and over 15% received services. In Syracuse, regular meetings between key partners were held to increase collaboration between criminal justice system actors. Partners reported that the routine meetings helped to facilitate accountability with partners in adhering to the focused deterrence strategy.

CONCLUSION

Focused deterrence strategies are broadly supported by a strong evidence-base. When considering the specific implementation of focused deterrence by PCSO, we find a smaller, but still promising body of evidence suggesting that the strategy may be effective. Nevertheless, we identified some concerns with PCSO's implementation as it relates to dosage and ability to connect individuals with necessary social support services. Finally, we found that enforcement contacts between PCSO and people identified for focused deterrence was low and there was no identifiable disproportionate impact on people of color.



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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Notification Letter



CHRIS NOCCO, SHERIFF
PASCO SHERIFF'S OFFICE

TEAMWORK • PROFESSIONALISM • SERVICE

2021

Greetings,

We are pleased to inform you that you have been selected to participate in a Prolific Offender Program run by the Pasco Sheriff's Office in cooperation with the Department of Justice Strategies for Policing Innovation Initiative. This program provides you with an opportunity to receive assistance from the Pasco Sheriff's Office and several community partners who will work with you to identify and overcome barriers that have hindered you in your life's journey. Ultimately, the goal of this program is to empower you to live a lawful, productive and fulfilled life.

Research indicates that barriers to successful living may involve struggles with mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, homelessness, finding a job, or several other challenges many people face on a daily basis. It is possible you have struggled with some of these issues. If so, please know the Pasco Sheriff's Office is committed to support you in overcoming these challenges through this program.

You may wonder why you were enrolled in this program. You were selected as a result of an evaluation of your recent criminal behavior using an unbiased, evidence-based risk assessment designed to identify prolific offenders in our community. As a result of this designation, we will go to great efforts to encourage change in your life through enhanced support and increased accountability. If you refrain from criminal activity over the next two years, your Prolific Offender designation will be removed.

It is our hope you will actively pursue change by seeking and participating in the services and support you will have access to. We have partnered with Pasco County Human Services to ensure you have help navigating all available resources. A list of many of these resources has been provided to you with this letter. Although help is available, you are the one who must decide whether or not you will pursue change and accept the help being offered.

This letter was designed to communicate our sincere desire to help you begin a new path. We are committed to your success. We are also committed to pursuing consistent, firm, and fair consequences if you choose to continue in the criminal behavior that is hurtful not only to you, but to your family and our community.

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Sheriff's Administration 8700 Citizen Drive New Port Richey, FL 34654 727-847-5878 | District I 7432 Little Road New Port Richey, FL 34654 727-847-5878 | District II 35409 State Road 52 Dade City, FL 33525 352-518-5000 | District III 11550 Trinity Boulevard Trinity, FL 34655 727-372-5900 | Pasco Detention Center 20101 Central Boulevard Land O' Lakes, FL 34637 813-996-6982 |
|--|--|--|---|---|



CHRIS NOCCO, SHERIFF PASCO SHERIFF'S OFFICE

TEAMWORK + PROFESSIONALISM + SERVICE

Our desire to help you will not hinder us from holding you fully accountable for your choices and actions. Effective today, your name and criminal history will be shared with local, state, and federal law enforcement entities and prosecutors. This includes the local State Attorney's Office, the United States Attorney's Office, FDLE, Parole and Probation, FBI, Homeland Security, ATF, DEA and other entities who have the ability to ensure the highest level of accountability for all current and future criminal acts you commit.

We hope you will join us in an effort to improve your life and the lives of the citizens of Pasco County. Our goal is to make Pasco County safer for everyone – including you. Now more than ever, we want you safe, alive, and out of jail, but we need your help to accomplish this.

If you are willing to pursue a new path as evidenced by your words and actions, we can work together to make Pasco safer. We will be in contact with you in the near future. If you have any questions about the selection criteria used to determine your eligibility for this program, please call the Pasco Sheriff's Office at 727-277-7124 during regular business hours.

Sincerely,

The Pasco Sheriff's Office

Sheriff's Administration
8700 Citizen Drive
New Port Richey, FL 34654
727-847-5878

District I
7432 Little Road
New Port Richey, FL 34654
727-847-5878

District II
36409 State Road 52
Dade City, FL 33525
352-518-5000

District III
11530 Trinity Boulevard
Trinity, FL 34655
727-372-5920

Pasco Detention Center
20101 Central Boulevard
Land O' Lakes, FL 34637
813-996-6982



Appendix II: Resource Guide



CHRIS NOCCO, SHERIFF **PASCO SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

TEAMWORK + PROFESSIONALISM + SERVICE

Quick Resource Guide

Pasco County Human Services (HUB)
8620 Galen Wilson Blvd. Suite 320, Port Richey 34668
13853 15th Street, Dade City, FL 33525
727-834-3297

2-1-1 United Way Pasco Hotline
NEED HELP? Dial 211
Main Line 1-877-828-8929

The R.O.P.E. Center
14121 Watertower Dr., Hudson, FL 34667
727-869-6426

Metropolitan Ministries
3214 US 19 North, Holiday, FL 34690
727-937-3268

Salvation Army West
8040 Washington Street, Port Richey, FL 34668
727-847-6321

Salvation Army East
14445 7th Street, Dade City, FL 33523
352-521-3126

Samaritan Project of Zephyrhills
5722 8th Street, Zephyrhills, FL 33542
813-810-8670

Sober Solutions
8056 Old County Road 54, New Port Richey, FL 34653
727-372-2010

Accelerated Resolution Therapy
USF1 2901 Bruce B Downs Blvd., Tampa, FL 33612
813-974-9266

Sheriff's Administration
8700 Citizen Drive
New Port Richey, FL 34654
727-847-5878

District I
7432 Little Road
New Port Richey, FL 34654
727-847-5878

District II
36409 State Road 52
Dade City, FL 33525
352-518-5000

District III
11530 Trinity Boulevard
Trinity, FL 34655
727-372-5920

Pasco Detention Center
20101 Central Boulevard
Land O' Lakes, FL 34637
813-596-6982



CHRIS NOCCO, SHERIFF
PASCO SHERIFF'S OFFICE

TEAMWORK + PROFESSIONALISM + SERVICE

Bay Area Legal Services
Various Locations
800-623-2257

Baycare Behavior Health
6205 Trouble Creek Road, New Port Richey, FL 34653
727-841-4466

Baycare Behavior Health
8002 King Helie Blvd., New Port Richey, FL 34653
727-841-4430

Baycare Dade City
14527 7th Street, Dade City, FL 33523
352-521-3351

Disability Rights of Florida
www.disabilityrightflorida.org
800-342-0823

Pasco County Housing Authority
Pascocountyhousing.org
352-567-0846

Salvation Army Domestic Violence
P.O. Box 5517, Hudson, FL 34674
727-494-7609

Sunrise Domestic Violence Center
12724 Smith Road, Dade City, FL 33525
352-521-3358

Florida Department of Children and Families
<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/abuse-hotline/>
800-96-ABUSE
800-955-8771

Sheriff's Administration
8700 Citizen Drive
New Port Richey, FL 34654
727-847-5878

District I
7432 Little Road
New Port Richey, FL 34654
727-847-5878

District II
36409 State Road 52
Dade City, FL 33525
352-518-5000

District III
11530 Trinity Boulevard
Trinity, FL 34655
727-372-5920

Pasco Detention Center
20101 Central Boulevard
Land O' Lakes, FL 34637
813-996-6982