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# Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination: Final Report

Cecile C. Guin

*Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, cguin@lsu.edu*

Jada Thomas-Smith

*Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, jtsmith@lsu.edu*

Elizabeth Winchester

*Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, eatkins@lsu.edu*

Tracey E. Rizzuto

*Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, trizzut@lsu.edu*

Aimee H. Moles

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, amoles@lsu.edu*

*See next page for additional authors*

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**Authors**

Cecile C. Guin, Jada Thomas-Smith, Elizabeth Winchester, Tracey E. Rizzuto, Aimee H. Moles, Steven Maberry, Haojie Zhu, Judith L. Rhodes, and Juan J. Barthelemy

# BRAVE

BATON ROUGE AREA VIOLENCE ELIMINATION

## FINAL REPORT



## **AUTHORS**

Cecile C. Guin, PhD, LCSW

Jada Thomas-Smith, MSW, LMSW

Elizabeth Winchester, PhD

Tracey Rizzuto, PhD

Aimee Moles, PhD, LCSW

Steven Maberry, PhD, CRC

Haojie Zhu, MS

Judith L. F. Rhodes, PhD, LMSW

Juan J. Barthelemy, PhD, LCSW-BACS

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## BATON ROUGE AREA VIOLENCE ELIMINATION FINAL REPORT

*Reporting Period: January 1, 2013-September 30, 2017*

Louisiana State University Social Research and Evaluation Center

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination (BRAVE) program developed as a public safety initiative in Baton Rouge neighborhoods plagued with high levels of homicide and gun violence. BRAVE, originally funded by a U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grant, focused on individuals involved in violent crime activity who were in the 12-21 year old age range. A collaborative group, including the Mayor's Office, the District Attorney, law enforcement agencies, community agencies, schools, and a university research partner, worked together from 2013 to 2017. The BRAVE model was informed by the Boston Operation Ceasefire model and used a focused deterrence approach as a prevention strategy. Key elements of the BRAVE model included organized stewardship and core groups, as well as engaging community and faith-based leaders to unite around the

intervention and provide a moral message for individuals to stop engaging in violent activity. Law enforcement strategies included homicide reviews, criminal group audits, and group member involved call ins. Actions resulting from the intervention included service referrals, job and education opportunities, and case management for those interested in changing from a life of crime. Criminal group members who did not heed the BRAVE message faced enforcement action responses. The LSU-SREC research partner used a collaborative, utilization-focused approach in a process and outcome evaluation. The findings showed that violent crime was reduced substantially following implementation of the program. While there were increases in violent crime at the end of the program, violent crime was measured at lower levels than at BRAVE's inception. Baton Rouge stakeholders have subsequently organized the next generation of the intervention; the program is now called TRUCE.

## HISTORY AND NEED

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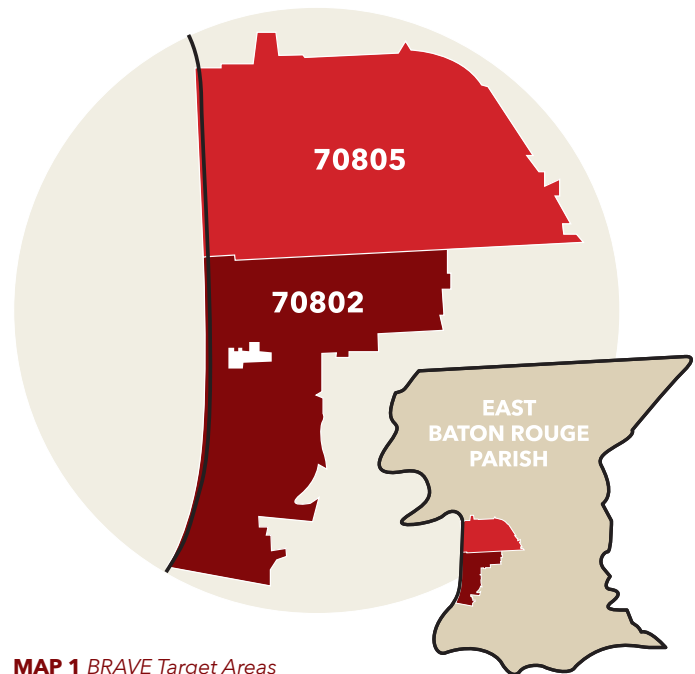
Baton Rouge (BR), the state capital and parish (county equivalent) seat of government, is located in Louisiana on the eastern bank of the Mississippi River. The city comprises 75 square miles with 229,000 residents within East Baton Rouge (EBR) parish, a 472 square mile area with a total population of 440,171. BR is a major port city with petrochemical and process technology industries as well as growing medical, technology and entertainment sectors.

After Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005, BR experienced a rapid rise in population with a related influx of gang and group-related violent activity. Extant chronic poverty in a portion of the city combined with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina resulted in a staggering homicide rate—roughly 25 times higher than the national average. By 2011, BR's homicide rate (30.1 homicides per 100,000 people) exceeded that of New York (6.6 homicides per 100,000 people), Los Angeles

(7.7 homicides per 100,000 people) and Washington, D.C. (21.9 homicides per 100,000 people). [FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, prepared by the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, Date of Download, 4/23/12].

An analysis of the violent crime incidents in BR clearly showed the geographic area in the zip code 70805 as the center of a crime "hot spot." Left behind economically, this area was among the most impoverished neighborhoods in the city, offering few opportunities for residents. Thirty percent (30%) of all homicides in BR occurred within the boundaries of the 70805 zip code area that comprises only 13.5% of BR's population and less than 12% of the city's geography. The offenders living in this area committed 25% of robberies, 38% of firearm assaults, and 40% of aggravated assaults in the whole city. The level of violent crime in 70805 among youthful offenders was also significant.

In 2012, efforts to address violent crime in the 70805 area began with the convening of a work group consisting of the Office of the Mayor-President, local law enforcement, the District Attorney (DA), and Louisiana State University Social Research and Evaluation Center (LSU-SREC) to explore evidence-based crime strategies. The Group Violence Intervention (GVI) strategy (originally conceptualized as Group Violence Reduction Strategy) was adopted and supported by a \$150,000 commitment from the BR Metropolitan Council. The BRAVE program became the GVI intervention for youth and young adults residing in the 70805 area. Later in 2012, BRAVE received a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to address violent offenders ages 12-21. Due to interconnected criminal activity and similar economic conditions, in 2013 OJJDP awarded additional funding to extend BRAVE into the 70802 zip code area.



**MAP 1** BRAVE Target Areas

## BRAVE MODEL

BRAVE was based on the GVI model used in Boston's Operation Ceasefire initiative in the 1990s. GVI is a focused deterrence strategy that targets a specific crime problem and applies an intense response within a specified high-crime-intensity area. GVI is based largely on the presumption that a majority of offenses are committed by a small number of individuals who are often organized, to some degree, in groups. The OJJDP grants were awarded for selected sites to replicate effective, evidence-based models. BR chose the GVI model because of its success in other parts of the country.

With the GVI model, focused deterrence strategies are used to reduce group-involved violence. Both GVI and Boston Operation Ceasefire use a "pulling levers" approach to identify and directly communicate consequences for violence to group members involved in a criminal enterprise. This approach involves delivering a strong deterrence message to group-involved

offenders that violence will no longer be tolerated. If violent behavior continues, the deterrent message is reinforced by applying a full range of legal sanctions, or "pulling levers," against the group members involved in ongoing violence. When applying a pulling levers approach, local and federal law enforcement, social service agencies, and community organizations reiterate the deterrence message and explain that current enforcement actions, directed against a particular group, are in response to continuing violent behavior. The U. S. Department of Justice explicitly promotes the use of multi-agency partnerships, strategic planning, training, outreach, and program accountability as central to successful program implementation for violence-reduction efforts and has identified focused deterrence initiatives as a model to be replicated.

An underlying assumption is that although violent acts are often perpetrated by individuals, they are rooted in a group dynamic. Once these chronic violent offenders are identified, disruption of group-involved violence occurs in multiple ways. Law enforcement agencies coordinate with one another to create predictable and meaningful consequences for those involved with groups engaged in violent behavior. Group members are told that following a violent incident, law enforcement will use all legal resources available to them in order to punish those who commit violent acts as well as their associates. Along with this message, service and community

partners offer help in the form of social and job services for those willing to leave the criminal lifestyle. In order to relay the focused deterrence message, direct and accurate communication is vitally important. Because many of these individuals are under some form of legal supervision, they are required to attend offender notification meetings or “call-ins” to hear the *No Violence* message and communicate it back to other active members of the group. At these meetings, group members are informed that violent incidents by any group member will result in a coordinated enforcement action by law enforcement on the entire group.

## Implementation of BRAVE Model

The BRAVE program replicated the GVI model with modifications to increase effectiveness. BRAVE involved a collaborative effort among law enforcement, service providers, faith-based community, industry, and LSU-SREC researchers.

### Organizational structure

BRAVE operated through a partnership with the Office of the Mayor-President and DA. The Office of the Mayor-President served as project administrator and fiscal agent while the DA managed the daily operations. BRAVE project staff coordinated program activities and community outreach. This structure functioned through a Stewardship Group and Core Group who convened regularly to provide programmatic oversight. A list of the Stewardship Group and Core Group agencies are listed in Appendix A.

### Promoting BRAVE through community engagement

One component of BRAVE was the implementation of **messaging and marketing campaigns**. The goal was to create a recognizable “brand” for BRAVE in the community and to promote a *No Violence* message. Community outreach events and planned marketing strategies helped spread the BRAVE message and improve the community’s perception of BRAVE and law enforcement.

### Reducing crime through law enforcement strategies

BRAVE used strategies within the GVI model to reduce violent crimes committed by groups. The strategies described below were designed to gather law enforcement intelligence, identify active groups and group members, and provide alternatives to criminal behavior.

**Homicide reviews** examined every homicide occurring in EBR parish. For homicide reviews to be effective, law enforcement officers most familiar with cases offered information including victim and suspect descriptions, updated arrest data, group involvement, and confirmed or speculative motive. **Group audits** updated the list of active groups and group members. BRAVE used the term group instead of gang, because the groups operating in EBR parish did not meet the federal definition of a gang. Law enforcement officers most familiar with groups in their designated patrol areas provided the level and type of criminal activity of each group and the status of existing feuds and alliances.

**Call-ins** promoted the *No Violence* message using a scripted message. Group members identified as the most influential received three alternatives: 1) “stop

the violence and go home”, 2) “stop the violence and take advantage of support services”, or 3) “continue group violence behavior and become a target for an intense enforcement action response.” Inviting influential group members ensured that the call-in message was shared among group associates.

In line with the options given at the call-in, a **case management model** provided support services for interested participants and associates who stopped their violent behavior (family members could also request services). Case managers and agency representatives convened **monthly interagency service**

**coordination (ISC)** meetings to coordinate services, monitor progress, and address barriers. **Enforcement action responses** delivered serious consequences to call-in participants as well as known group associates who continued to commit crimes. These responses were critical to BRAVE as it sent a message of zero tolerance.

**Customized notifications** involved BRAVE partners visiting a group member at his or her home to deliver the *No Violence* message. These visits served as a means to address potential conflicts, prevent retaliations, and calm identified hot spots.

# EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

LSU-SREC used a collaborative, utilization-focused approach to carry out a process and outcome evaluation of the BRAVE program. The purpose of the evaluation was to: 1) measure the implementation fidelity and quality of the GVI model in the target zip code areas (70802 and 70805) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and 2) examine the effectiveness of the BRAVE program in reducing crime and promoting productive behavior among identified youth. A longitudinal, repeated-

measures research design was used to assess project outcomes over the course of the 5-year project. Findings from the evaluation were intended to provide formative information on project implementation, as well as to inform project and policy decision-making by key partners and stakeholders. Annual evaluation reports were delivered to the U.S. Department of Justice, OJJPD based on federal reporting requirements.

## Data Collection

The evaluation included an examination of quantitative and qualitative data obtained from multiple sources. A Cooperative Endeavor and Confidentiality Agreement was signed between LSU-SREC and the City of Baton Rouge, the DA’s office, Baton Rouge Police Department (BRPD), and East Baton Rouge Sherriff’s Office (EBRSO) to ensure that pertinent data were shared for evaluation purposes. Individual-level crime data, including data on homicides, robberies, aggravated assaults, and illegal use of a weapon, were provided monthly by law enforcement agencies. The LSU-SREC team collected additional crime data at homicide reviews and group audits, as well as at law enforcement-led committees and task force meetings. In addition, BRAVE case managers provided information on the delivery of services, such as educational and employment services. All BRAVE

community events and educational activities, as well as training workshops, were documented through sign-in sheets and attendance records. Key service partners provided additional information, such as referrals and service delivery information. Focus groups held in 2015 provided qualitative data on residents’ perceptions of violence and safety in their community.

Violent crime data used in this report spanned from 2010 through September of 2017 to provide an examination of trends in crime prior to (January 2010 - December 2012) and after (January 2013 – September 2017) implementation. Because the BRAVE program ended in September of 2017, there were only 9 months of data to be considered in the final year of the program compared to 12 months of data for the other years. In

order to determine trends in violent activity before and after BRAVE implementation, a rate was created for each year. The number of violent crime incidents were divided by the number of months of data available for each year and an average number of incidents per month of each year were compared to each other to observe increases and decreased in violent crime activity across time.

Quantitative data were primarily examined through three types of analysis: 1) statistical analysis of crime, case management and support services, employment,

and education data, 2) geographic information system (GIS) mapping and spatial statistics, and 3) social network analysis (SNA). The analyses of violent crime activity and group activity in the target areas and the rest of EBR were disseminated through monthly dashboard reports and an annual report to the Core Group, BRAVE administrators, and law enforcement. Implementation findings are reported below.

## Implementation Findings

### Messaging and marketing campaigns

During implementation, BRAVE used messaging and marketing campaigns to share the *No Violence* message at community events, community forums, and school rallies. A logo was featured on promotional products and printed materials (see Appendix B). BRAVE program staff collaborated with organizations to promote consistent messaging. BRAVE partners spoke frequently to civic organizations, local news outlets and radio stations to educate the public about its purpose. A list of BRAVE sponsored/co-sponsored community events are listed in Appendix C. Additionally, BRAVE used a website, Facebook and Twitter accounts to engage and educate the community about BRAVE's strategies and events.

The faith-based community was also a part of the messaging strategy. Prominent members of the clergy agreed to spread the *No Violence* message to their congregations and throughout the community. Approximately 34 religious leaders participated in Cops and Clergy Academies in 2015 and 2016. These 6-week courses educated leaders about law enforcement processes while discussing community-police relations. Reformed offenders also talked to group members about their experiences with the criminal justice system and encouraged them to stop criminal behavior.

### Homicide reviews

Table 1 shows the number of homicides examined at each homicide review. In all, 350 homicides were reviewed during implementation. Of those homicides, 153 occurred in the BRAVE target areas, which accounted for 44% of the homicides in EBR parish.

*Note: Homicides in the final quarter of a year are reviewed in the first quarter of the following year. Therefore, the number of homicides reviewed yearly may not match the number of homicides that occurred in that year.*

**Table 1: Number of Homicides**

Year	All Homicides	70805	70802
2013	70	21	11
2014	66	14	20
2015	48	6	15
2016	74	17	11
2017	92	18	20

## Group audits

Prior to implementation, there were 55 active groups—the group audit process identified 12 more. Of the 67 groups, law enforcement considered 41 groups “inactive”, while 15

groups remained “active” at the end of implementation. Over the course of BRAVE, 983 group-affiliated members in 67 groups were linked to 617 violent crimes.

## Call-ins

BRAVE staff conducted nine call-in meetings during implementation (see Table 2). At the first call-in, 82% of invitees participated. This high response rate exceeded expectations of the BRAVE partners based on the first call-in results from other cities that implemented the GVI model.

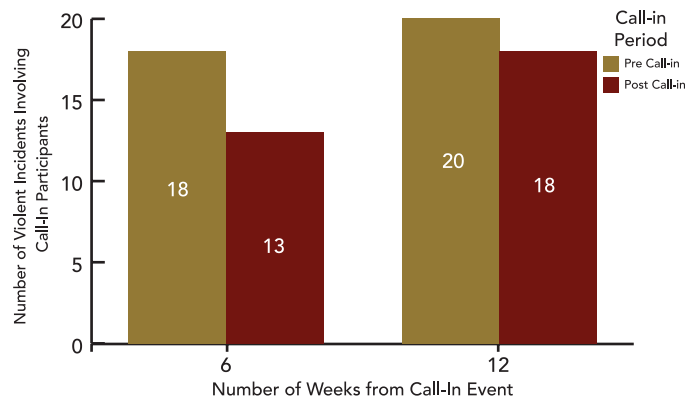
An analysis of call-ins helped determine if the number of violent incidents declined among call-in participants receiving the *No Violence* message. Short-term (6 weeks before and after) and long-term (12 weeks before and after) frequencies compared criminal behavior before and after a call-in event for participants and other individuals associated with a criminal event involving a group member. In the weeks following each call-in, 9% of invited participants committed 31 violent crimes incidents.

As presented in the pre/post crime comparison Graph 1, there was an approximately 19% drop in violent crime after a call-in; however, these effects were not uniform for each event. The call-ins demonstrating the strongest effects were Events #2 (in 2013) and #7 (in 2015), with pronounced effects for both short (Graph 2) and long-term (Graph 3) durations. The least “effective” call-in event was #3 wherein violent crime rates among participants surged in both the short and long-term durations. Interestingly, the contextual implication of crime increases that are typical in summer months did not seem to have any bearing on the call-in effect in that the “most effective” and “least effective” call-ins both occurred in the months of September.

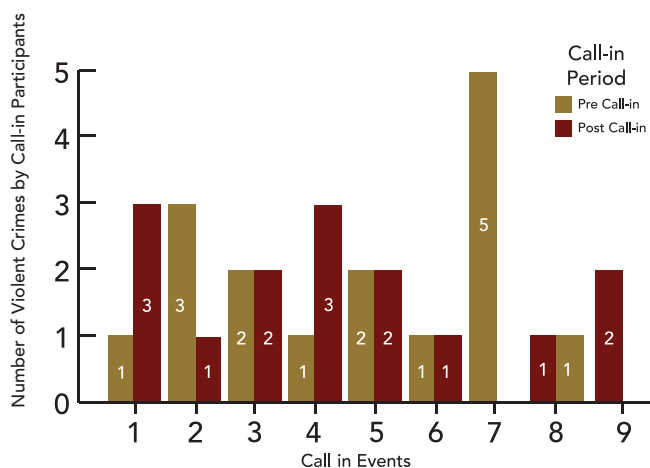
**Table 2: Call-in Response Rates**

Year	# of Invitees	# of Attendees	Response Rate
2013	45	37	82%
	36	27	75%
2014	28	21	75%
	40	27	68%
2015	28	15	54%
	27	20	74%
	38	25	66%
2016	30	17	57%
	31	23	74%

**Graph 1: Pre and Post Call-in Comparisons**

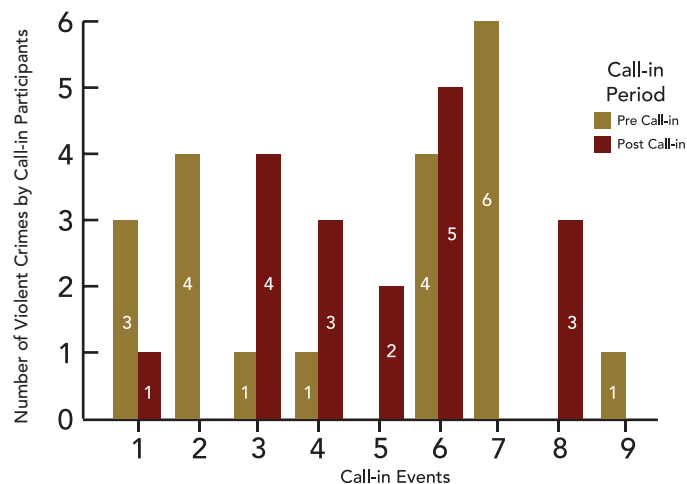


**Graph 2: 6-Week Pre/Post Comparison**

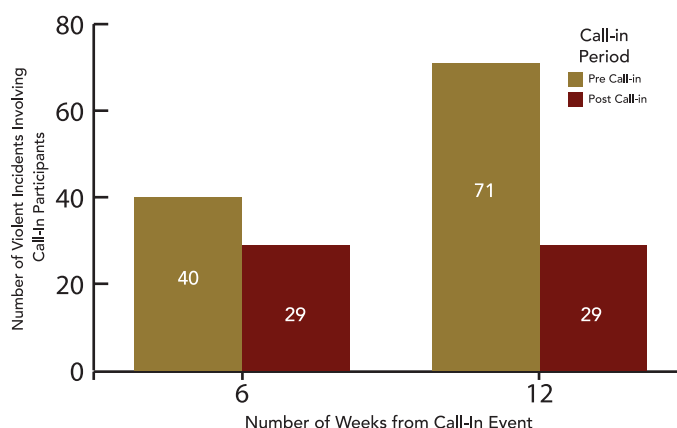


Call-ins were associated with pronounced declines in violent behavior among one-degree associates of call-in participants. In fact, the declines were more pronounced for associates than for those individuals directly invited to participate in call-in events. Associates of call-in participants exhibited a 28% decrease in violent criminal behavior in the 6-weeks after a call-in event (Graph 4). Even more remarkable is the 59% decrease in associate's violent criminal behavior that persisted for a longer term, 12 weeks post call-in event (Graph 4).

**Graph 3: 12-Week Pre/Post Comparison**



**Graph 4: Pre and Post Call-in Associate Comparisons**



## Case Management Model

Important information regarding support services were shared with individuals attending the call-in. Group affiliated individuals ages 12-21, or family members able to show proof of kinship, were encouraged to contact the BRAVE administrative office voluntarily to receive services. BRAVE case managers confirmed eligibility, conducted psychosocial assessments, and obtained informed consent prior to service delivery. In all, 105 clients enrolled in case management services (36 call-in participants, 30 group associates, and 39 family members) during implementation.

Of the 105 clients, the majority were African-American males ranging in age from 12 to 21 years of age. At assessment, half of clients were enrolled in school; two clients had a high school diploma and four had a GED. Almost 60% lived in single parent homes, with the

mother as the primary caregiver. The average household size was five with an annual income of less than \$20,000. About 70% were on probation—while some clients were involved in the court system, they were not required to participate in BRAVE as a condition. BRAVE program staff often accompanied clients to court hearings.

BRAVE case managers created individualized service plans based on the identified needs of clients. Due to high-risk home environments, many clients needed intense levels of family support. Case managers assisted clients and families with service referrals, appointments and transportation. Case managers and partnering agencies convened ISC meetings for all clients to discuss progress, changes to treatment plans, and barriers affecting a client's ability to opt out of violent behavior.

Table 3 shows the number of clients who participated in the different support services during implementation. Most clients needed transportation and job seeking assistance. Transportation was a predominant need because clients required help getting to service providers and appointments. Almost all clients worked towards obtaining a GED, or were enrolled in traditional/vocational school or community college. Other supports utilized by clients included mental health services, addiction treatment, financial counseling, and mentoring.

**Table 3: Number of Support Services Provided**

Total Number of Support Services			
Transportation	90	Employment	29
Job Seeking	62	Addiction Treatment	27
Traditional School	43	Financial Counseling	25
Job/Career Readiness	38	Mentoring	21
Mental Health Treatment	35	Vocational School	21
GED Preparation	30	Local Community College	14

*Note: Total number of clients = 105 with some receiving multiple services.*

## Enforcement Action Response

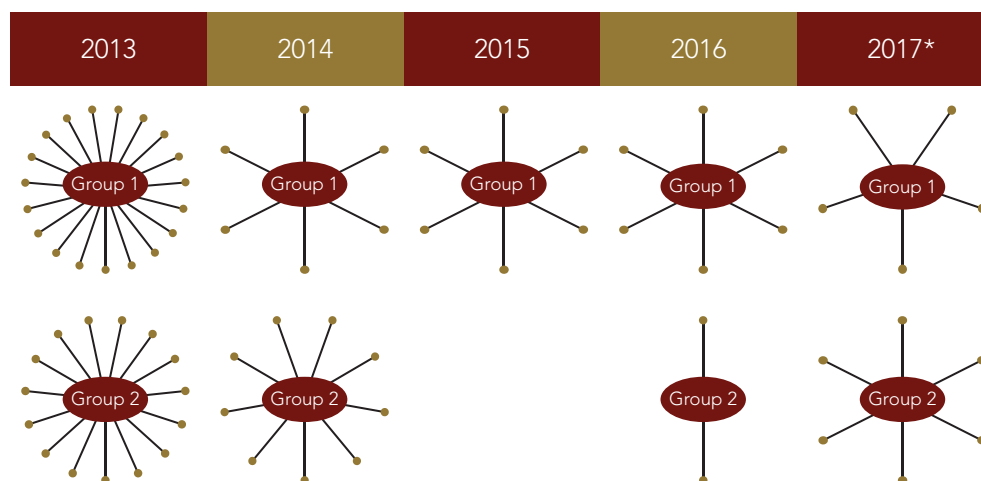
Enforcement action responses were delivered to two identified groups. In the network analysis below, Figure 1 depicts the criminal activity for each group prior to the first call-in and enforcement action in 2013 and in the years following. Law enforcement reports showed that “Group 1” committed 21 crimes and “Group 2” committed 15 crimes in the almost 4 years following the call-in and enforcement action.

After the enforcement actions, violent activity decreased for each group. Group 1’s violent activity

had an immediate decline and remained lower through October of 2017. In contrast, Group 2 had an initial decline and was inactive for all of 2015, but the violent activity of Group 2 re-emerged in 2016 and had increased activity in 2017.

These enforcement actions were considered effective, as evidenced by the decrease in number of violent crime incidents following the targeted intervention; however, other groups continued to engage in violent behavior and no additional enforcement actions were carried out.

**Figure 1: Criminal activity of the two groups receiving enforcement action**



*Note: Each gold circle represents a group member who committed a violent criminal act.  
\*Through the end of program activity in 2017*

## Customized Notifications

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During implementation, 24 custom notifications were delivered to youth between July 2014 and January 2015. Two youth and five group involved family members enrolled in BRAVE services following the customized notification. Failed attempts were made to contact an additional seven youth during this time. A group of BRAVE representatives delivered the *No Violence* message group directly to group members. The GVI strategy recommends this type of individualized contact in certain cases, as this type of individual action serves as a mechanism to communicate directly with those who have not been responsive to call-ins

and continue to engage in violent activity, for example group members not on probation/parole. Customized notifications were also used to sustain the community moral voice message between call-ins, provide a flexible communication tool to quell potential conflicts, prevent retaliations, calm hot spots, and allow for tailored messages to individual circumstances. These notifications were typically delivered by the BRAVE Director (a police officer), Assistant Director (a sheriff's deputy), another representative from law enforcement (DA, the U.S. attorney, etc.), a service provider, and a community leader or faith-based representative.

# CRIME AND SUPPORT SERVICES OUTCOMES

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One of the primary goals of the BRAVE program was to identify criminal groups responsible for violence in the city. Members of these groups were given the *No Violence* message and offered service referrals. The purpose of these interventions was to reduce violent crime in areas of the city with the highest concentration of violence (zip codes 70805 and 70802) specifically homicides, aggravated assaults, robberies, and illegal use

of a weapon. An intense effort was expended to identify the groups and their members that were responsible for violence in the city. Crime outcomes by geographic location, and for identified groups were measured over the course of the program. Educational and employment outcomes for individuals who chose to participate in BRAVE support services are described.

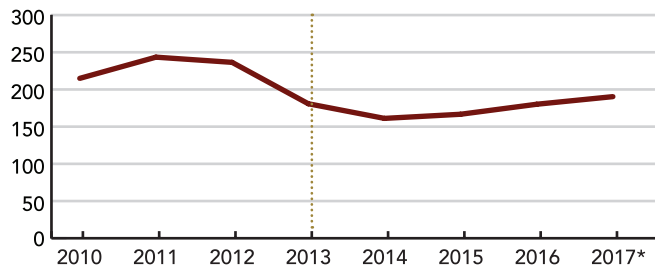
## Crime Outcomes by Geographic Location

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Initially, EBR parish experienced a considerable reduction in violent crime, not just in the target area, but in all areas of the parish after program implementation especially during the first two years (2013 and 2014). By 2015, small increases in violent crime were observed through the parish and larger increases in violence were appearing at the end of 2016 through 2017.

Graphs 5 and 6 display the average number of violent crimes per month in each year from 2010 through September, 2017 in the parish and the target areas of 70805 and 70802. While violent crime incidents were increasing in the final months of the BRAVE program in EBR parish and the target areas, violent crime levels were still lower than pre-BRAVE years.

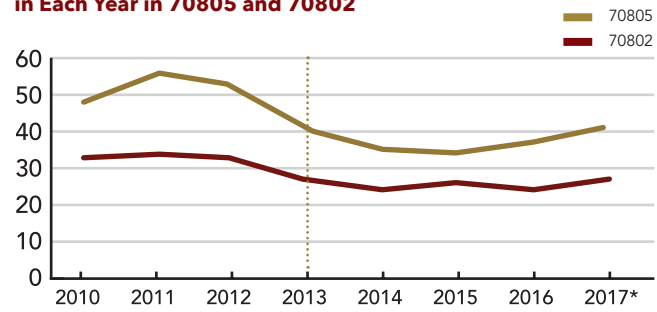
**Graph 5: Average Number of Violent Crime Incidents per Month in Each Year in East Baton Rouge Parish**



While increases in violent crime were seen in late 2016, the increases were not uniform across all violent crime indicators. A very low number of homicides were reported in the first nine months of 2016; however, homicides rose sharply during the last months of the year. Despite that increase, the overall number of homicides for 2016 (n=61) was the lowest in over a decade.

During these final months of the BRAVE program, homicide, aggravated assault, and illegal use of a

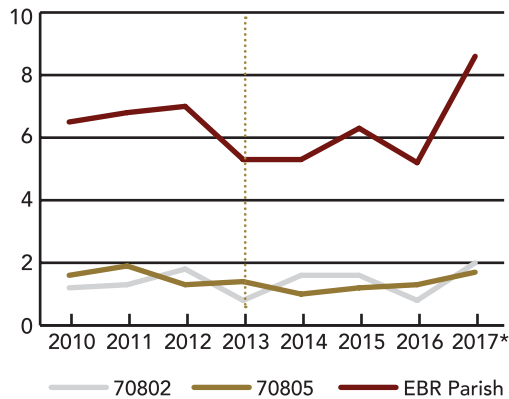
**Graph 6: Average Number of Violent Crime Incidents per Month in Each Year in 70805 and 70802**



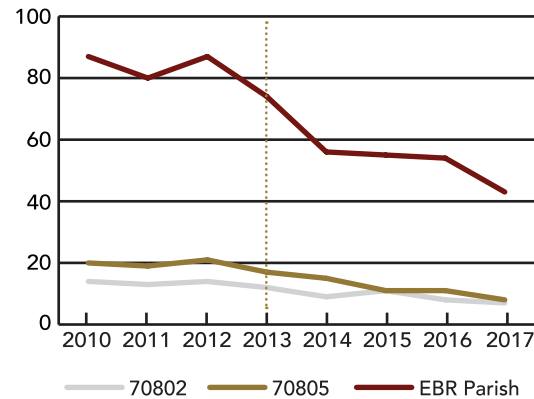
**NOTE:** Vertical line indicates start of BRAVE program

weapon incidents were increasing more quickly than had been seen since the BRAVE program began. A noteworthy finding was that robberies continued to decline in 2017, a trend that largely remained consistent since the implementation of BRAVE in 2012. Graphs 7-10 show changes in the average number of crimes per month per year in each violent crime category for the target areas and all other areas of EBRP from 2010 through September, 2017.

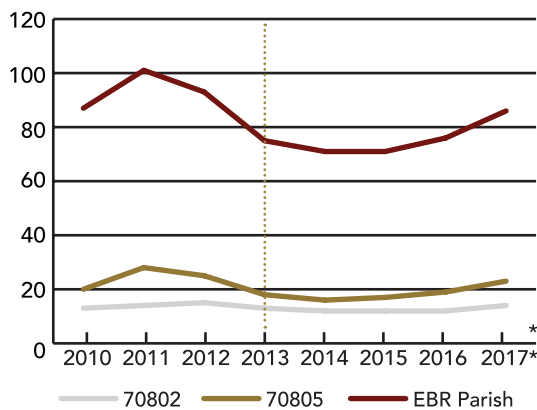
**Graph 7: Homicides**



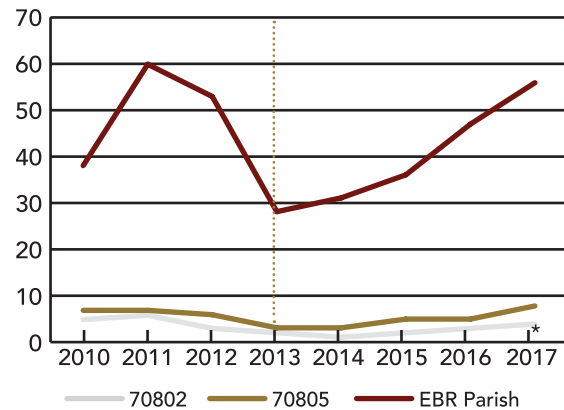
**Graph 8: Robberies**



**Graph 9: Aggravated Assaults**



**Graph 10: Illegal Use of a Weapon**



\* Data through September of 2017

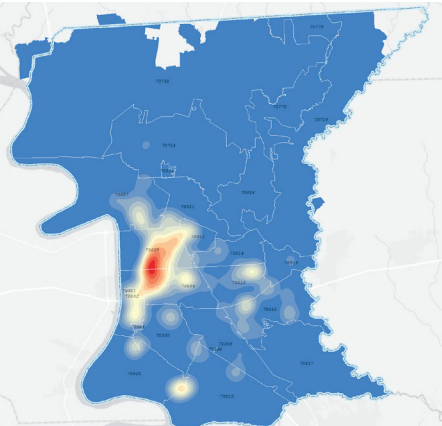
**NOTE:** Vertical line indicates start of BRAVE program

# Geographic Information System Mapping

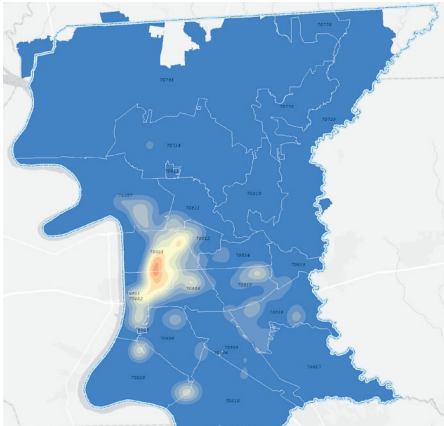
The areas of the parish with the largest reductions in violence after BRAVE implementation were the target areas within zip codes 70805 and 70802. Maps 2-4 provide a graphical representation of the *density* or concentration of violent crime in EBR parish. The concentration of violent incidents has been stratified by shades on a color gradient. The warmer shades of the color gradient indicate a higher number of violent incidents. The cooler shades of the color gradient indicate less violent activity or a smaller number

of incidents. Map 2 represents the locations and density of violent crime in the parish prior to BRAVE implementation (Pre-BRAVE 2010-2012) and Map 3 represents the locations and density of violent crime in the parish after BRAVE implementation (Post-BRAVE 2013-2017). Map 4 highlights the areas of the parish which experienced increases or decreases in the average number of violent crimes committed when comparing pre-BRAVE versus post-BRAVE crime.

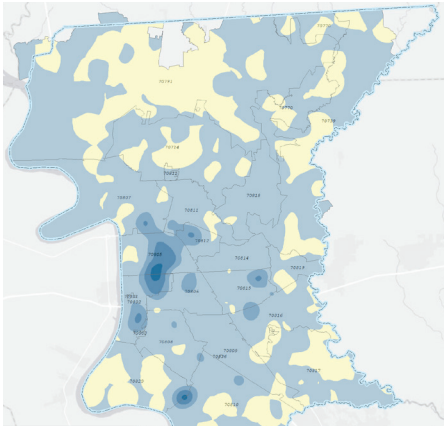
## East Baton Rouge Parish



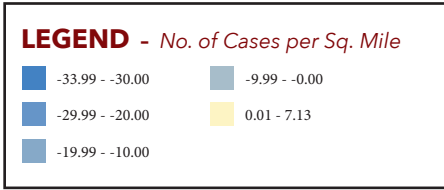
**MAP 2** Pre-BRAVE (2010-2012) Average Violent Crime Density Per Year



**MAP 3** Post-BRAVE (2013-2017) Average Violent Crime Density Per Year



**MAP 4** Pre- & Post-BRAVE Difference



\*Only applicable to pre-BRAVE crime rates

The pre-BRAVE map (Map 2) shows that the highest concentrations of violent crime occurred in the targeted areas. The post-BRAVE map (Map 3) shows that while the highest concentration of violent crime was still in the targeted areas, the number of cases was considerably less and impacting a smaller area.

Map 4 reveals the areas that experienced changes in violent crime after BRAVE implementation. The greatest reductions in number of violent crime incidents per square mile after BRAVE implementation occurred in the 70805 and 70802 zip code areas.

## Key Findings:

EBR parish and the target areas of 70805 and 70802 experienced a considerable reduction in violence after the implementation of the BRAVE program especially in the early years of the program. At the end of the program in 2017, violence was increasing, but overall rates were still lower than pre-BRAVE years.

The greatest reductions in the number of violent crime incidents per sq. mile occurred in 70805 and 70802 zip codes.

The geographic outcomes show that the number of violent incidents decreased after BRAVE implementation in the target areas of 70805 and 70802 zip codes. EBR parish experienced a decrease as well. However, at the end of the program, violence was increasing in many areas of the parish.

## Crime Outcomes for Group Members

The violent crime behaviors of identified group members were analyzed to determine if there were changes in behavior once the BRAVE program was implemented.

### Group Involved Violent Crime

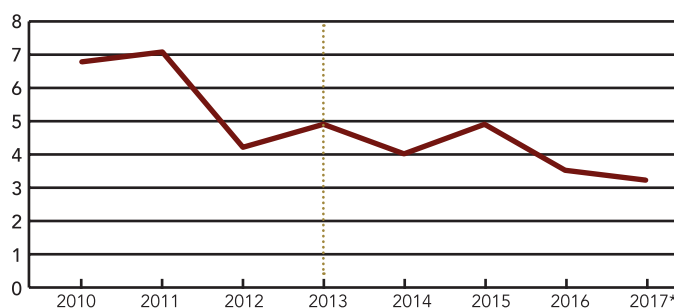
Group Member Involved (GMI) violent crime declined with the implementation of BRAVE. While there were a few spikes in crime in the parish, the average number of GMI violent crimes was lower at the end of the BRAVE program in the targeted areas of 70805 and 70802 (Graph 11) and the rest of EBR parish (Graph 12).

At the start of BRAVE, 55 groups were identified as active in the BR area, and an additional 12 groups

were identified or emerged between 2013 and 2017.

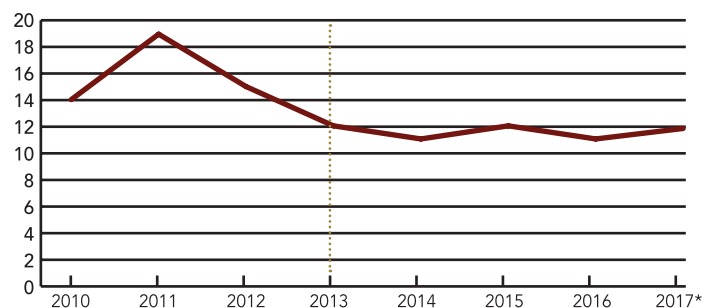
By the end of the reporting period 75% (n=41) of the initial groups had been downgraded to “inactive” and only 15 of the 67 (22%) were considered active (i.e., regularly engaging in violence) at the last group audit in November 2017. Twelve of the groups downgraded were among the most highly active at one point in time. Over the course of BRAVE, 983 group members affiliated with the 67 groups were linked to 617 violent crimes.

**Graph 11: GMI Violent Crime Incidents in Zip Codes 70805 and 70802**



\* Data through September 2017

**Graph 12: GMI Violent Crime Incidents in EBR Parish**



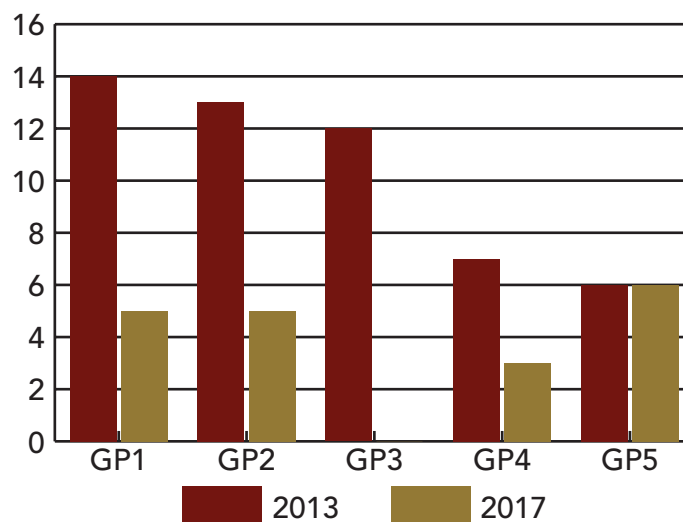
**NOTE:** Vertical line indicates start of BRAVE program

Graph 13 illustrates the number of violent incidents for the five most violent groups in BR at the start of BRAVE in 2013 and their subsequent activity at the end of 2017. The most active groups at the start of BRAVE (depicted in the graph as “GP1”, “GP2”, “GP3”, “GP4” and “GP5”) were involved in over 50 violent crime incidents in 2013, but the same five groups were involved in only 19 incidents in 2017. Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4 were involved in noticeably less crime and in the case of Group 3 no violent crime after BRAVE implementation. Group 5 was involved in the same number of incidents (n=5) in 2013 and in 2017.

## Key Finding:

75% (41 out of 55) of the groups active at the start of BRAVE were downgraded to “inactive” by the end of the program in 2017.

**Graph 13: Most Active Groups Involved in Violent Crime Incidents in 2013**

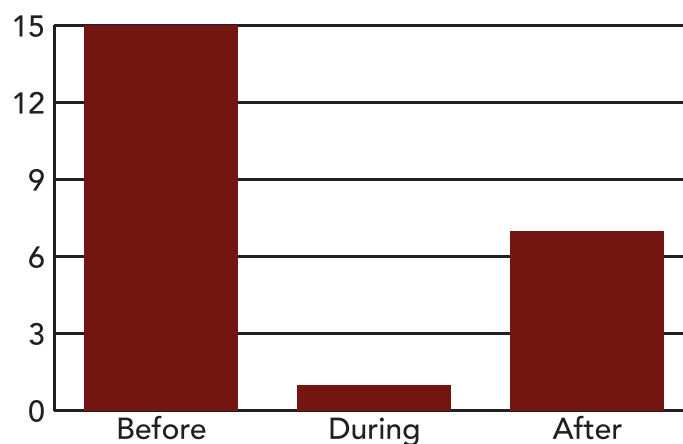


The group member outcomes show that the number of groups and group involved violence decreased after BRAVE implementation. At the end of the program group involved violence was still present in EBR parish but at lower levels than at the start of the BRAVE program.

## Support Services Outcomes

Of the 105 youth who chose to receive services through the BRAVE program, 15 had been arrested for a violent crime prior to enrolling in services; 13 had only one prior arrest for a violent crime and two were arrested twice. One youth was arrested for a violent crime while enrolled in BRAVE, and seven (11%) after being discharged. Three youth were arrested for a violent crime both before and after BRAVE involvement, while 12 who were arrested prior to intake did not engage in violent behavior again. Graph 14 illustrates the number of clients involved in a violent crime before, during and after receiving BRAVE support services.

**Graph 14: Number of BRAVE Clients Involved in Violent Crime**



## Educational and Employment Outcomes Among BRAVE Youth

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In addition to reducing crime, another important goal of the BRAVE program was to promote productive behavior for those who chose to give up criminal behaviors. Case managers provided referrals for job preparation services and helped identify viable employment options. Educational and employment outcomes for youth were provided by some of the participants during the course of their participation in BRAVE. While in BRAVE, 57 of the 66 youth (86%) participated in school and/or employment opportunities.

### Educational Outcomes

Several youth demonstrated educational progress over the course of their participation in the BRAVE program. Twelve youth under age 18, who were previously not participating in school, enrolled in school or GED classes after starting the BRAVE program. Of those youth, two enrolled in high school, four took GED classes, two participated in vocational school, and one enrolled in both a GED and vocational classes. In all, six youth received a high school diploma or GED and four graduated from vocational school while involved in BRAVE services.

### Employment Outcomes

An essential part of productivity and self-sufficiency for BRAVE youth was job preparation and stable employment. Twenty-nine youth (44%) were legally employed while in BRAVE, compared to 10 youth who reported employment at intake into the program. Five youth age 18 or older who were unemployed at the beginning of BRAVE were able to obtain employment while receiving program services. Of those who were not employed, 19 were under the age of 16 and regularly attending school. In addition, most youth participated in job seeking (n=57) or job/career readiness (n=35) services.

### Key Findings:

57 youth (86%) participated in education and/or employment opportunities while in BRAVE

6 youth obtained a HS degree or high school equivalency diploma

4 youth graduated from a vocational training program

Most youth used job seeking (n=57) or job readiness (n=35) services

29 youth were employed while in the BRAVE program

5 youth were unemployed at the start of BRAVE obtained employment during the program

In all, these outcomes show that BRAVE case management and referrals to educational and job services helped a number of youth move toward a greater education and self-sufficiency. However, some youth struggled to remain in school and employed. As an example, nine youth did not participate in any education or employment services while in BRAVE.

# CONCLUSION

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## Effectiveness of BRAVE

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A major factor for the effectiveness of BRAVE was the commitment among public officials and leadership associated with the program. Local law enforcement, social service agencies, and faith-based organizations all played important roles in implementation of the program. Although BRAVE was administered through the Office of the Mayor-President, commitments from members of the Stewardship and Core groups were critical to the success of BRAVE.

From its inception, BRAVE messaging and marketing campaigns were effective in spreading the *No Violence* message to the community. These campaigns were critical, especially in the beginning stages. The BRAVE marketing efforts and media relationships resulted in extensive community knowledge of the law enforcement effort to reduce youth violence. Members of the BRAVE program were constantly invited to provide presentations on the project and its progress. BRAVE exceeded the number of community events that were initially proposed. Community events were well attended and conducted in conjunction with other occasions, such as “Back to School” events and holidays. Public officials involved with BRAVE contributed to the events with food, drinks, cooking, and fun activities.

An important part of the BRAVE model was the case management and services offered to youth as an alternative to violence. Eligible youth who contacted the BRAVE administrative offices for services were well supported by committed case managers and service providers. Clients were placed in employment settings and were provided educational support, addiction treatment and mentoring. This was notable as clients and families receiving services required extensive support, especially with transportation.

The implementation of a Cops and Clergy Academy improved relations among some members of the community and law enforcement. These academies

provided a safe space for religious leaders and law enforcement to discuss issues related to the community’s negative perceptions of law enforcement and the need for more police presence. Religious leaders were also educated on police policies and procedures.

Critical law enforcement strategies of the BRAVE model were conducted consistently throughout the grant. Homicide reviews, group audits, and call-ins were provided from the beginning of the program. An additional strategy of customized notifications was added demonstrating the core group’s commitment to reach the individuals who needed the most help. Customized notifications brought the *No Violence* message directly to individuals and their families through home visits.

There was a reduction in violent crime during the grant period. Prior to the BRAVE program, the highest concentrations of violent crime in the BR area were occurring in the 70805 and 70802 zip code areas, the target locations of the program. During the grant period, much of BR experienced a reduction in violent crime, but the area that experienced the greatest reduction in violent crime after BRAVE implementation was the target area of 70805 and 70802 zip codes. At the end of the program in 2017, violence was increasing, but overall rates were still lower than pre-BRAVE years.

From the beginning of the BRAVE program, an effort was made to identify groups that were responsible for violent activity. During the years of the grant, 75% (41 out of 55) of the “active” groups at the start of BRAVE were downgraded to “inactive” by the end of the program in 2017. The total number of groups and the number of group member involved individuals, that were engaged in violent activity, decreased after BRAVE implementation. At the end of the program, group involved violence was still present in EBR parish but at much lower levels than at the start of the BRAVE program.

## Challenges to Implementation

BRAVE experienced much success; however, there were areas of the program that encountered challenges and barriers during the implementation of the program. While many important law enforcement strategies were implemented consistently throughout the program, enforcement actions were not applied consistently throughout the grant period. As described in the GVI model, swift enforcement response action is critical to the effectiveness of the model. This was confirmed by the reduction in violent criminal activity following the two group enforcement actions conducted by law enforcement. Lack of consistent enforcement actions, as communicated in the scripted message to call-in participants, weakened the message given at the call-ins.

Providing reliable transportation to clients and families remained an issue throughout the duration of the grant. A majority of clients needed

transportation assistance to attend court dates, job interviews, and other appointments. The Core and Stewardship Groups made several attempts to address this issue; however, it was never resolved fully.

Major changes in key leadership positions occurred during the grant period—the election of a new Mayor President and administration, a change in the BRAVE program Director, and a newly appointed police chief. The City Parish remained the lead and fiscal agent of the grant. As the transition among administrations began, the sharing of grant related knowledge was problematic. As a result, federal reporting, existing contracts, and hiring decisions were significantly impacted. By the time issues related to procurement and grant expenditures were realized, BRAVE had a substantial balance of grant funds to use with little time. Efforts to extend the original grant period were denied.

## Challenging Events in Baton Rouge

The death of Mr. Alton Sterling and the subsequent deaths of three members of law enforcement impacted the implementation of BRAVE strategies. On July 5, 2016, Alton Sterling was fatally shot following a confrontation with two white police officers in the 70802 zip code area at a convenience store. This event was recorded on cell phone video which brought the incident directly and immediately to the attention of the public. In the following days, protesters surrounded the store, marched through the Capital area, and blocked local streets and highways. Outsiders to the community arrived with news crews and protesters, while tensions rose to new heights between police and demonstrators prompting scenes of angry marchers and police in riot gear to fill the news and social media sites. Then on July 17, 2016, an armed man from Kansas City, Missouri, attacked law enforcement in Baton Rouge killing three officers and injuring three others.

Additionally, BR faced unprecedented flooding in August of 2016. Named the “1000 Year Storm,” the weather event caused areas of the city to experience flooding that had never flooded before as major waterways were breached. Homes, schools, and businesses were severely impacted by flood water causing residents to either evacuate or be rescued by first responders and good Samaritans. Parts of the Interstate and major roadways were impassable shutting down a significant part of the city. EBR and 20 surrounding parishes were declared federal disaster areas making them eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance. As flood waters receded, City-Parish Government and other partners began the tasks of helping residents by securing shelter locations, providing clothing and meals, and assisting with clean-up efforts by picking up debris accumulated on sidewalks.

With most of the city impacted by the flood, some BRAVE activities were affected as City-Parish Government responded to flood related issues. Few BRAVE activities continued during this time (no

homicide review, audits, neighborhood events, or canvases). The full impact these events on crime and the rapid rise of violence at the end of 2016 and in 2017 is not known or well understood.

## Sustainability

With the BRAVE program coming to a close, public officials and BRAVE program leaders were committed to sustaining the efforts of the program. The DA coordinated communication with the National Network of Safe Communities (NNSC) for ideas, training, and support as plans to move forward are developed.

BRAVE became recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in 2015. The non-profit program has been renamed TRUCE. Combined with local industry support and commitments from other stakeholders, TRUCE is a sustainable program. Branding, community engagement and law enforcement strategies need to be evaluated and updated as the program is now unrestricted by the guidelines of the original grant.

In the last few years, BR law enforcement agencies have organized and developed several new innovative techniques to combat crime in the city. The BR Public Safety Common Operational Platform (PSCOP), Group Intelligence Unit (GIU), Violent Crime Unit (VCU), and the Crime Strategies Unit (CSU) are examples of law enforcement's commitment to collaboration and information sharing to improve public safety. Many of these groups have successfully adopted focused deterrence strategies.

It is recommended that strong community involvement be included in these efforts moving forward. It is critical to include as partners those most impacted by violence and the subsequent interventions. The ongoing involvement with the community will be critical to developing better law enforcement-community relations.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: List of Stewardship and Core Group Agencies

- Baton Rouge Dream Center
- Baton Rouge Police Department
- Capital Area Human Services
- Department of Juvenile Services
- East Baton Rouge District Attorney's Office
- East Baton Rouge Office of Mayor-President
- East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office
- ExxonMobil
- Faith-Based Representatives
- Family Youth and Service Center (FYSC)
- HOPE Ministries
- Louisiana State University Social Research and Evaluation Center
- Louisiana Youth Sports Network
- Turner Industries

## Appendix B: Examples of BRAVE Messaging and Marketing Campaigns

GED Classes

Substance Abuse Treatment

Mental Health Services

Family Services

How can **BRAVE** help you?

BATON ROUGE AREA VIOLENCE ELIMINATION

Mentors

Job Placement Assistance

After School Programs

Recreational Programs

Enjoy **FREE** food, music and entertainment.  
Discover what **BRAVE** is doing in your **Community**

**BRAVE**

BATON ROUGE AREA VIOLENCE ELIMINATION

**Faith. Family. Fun.**

Saturday, November 2nd  
2-5 p.m.  
BREC's Howell Park

**What is BRAVE?**

BATON ROUGE AREA VIOLENCE ELIMINATION

**What is BRAVE?**  
BRAVE is a program designed to reduce group violence in Baton Rouge. BRAVE gives young people a choice: accept help to leave violence behind, or legal consequences will follow.

**How does BRAVE work?**  
BRAVE gives young people involved in violent groups a way out. With one call, they get access to the services they need to help them leave behind a life of violence. However, they must promise to stop participating both in violent activity and with their groups.

**What does BRAVE offer?**  
BRAVE has members to provide family support, education, job training, out-of-school activities, substance abuse counseling and mental health treatment.

**How can I learn more?**  
If you or someone you know needs help leaving violence behind or for more information, call (225) 239-7835. You can also visit our website at [bravebtr.com](http://bravebtr.com).

**Live BOLD. Be BRAVE.**

BRAVEbtr  
BRAVEBatonRouge

1120 Government Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

BATON ROUGE AREA VIOLENCE ELIMINATION

How can **BRAVE** help you?

- GED CLASSES
- JOB PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE
- AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS
- MENTORS
- MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT
- FAMILY SERVICES
- RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**Are you BRAVE?**  
If you or someone you know needs more help leaving violence behind, please call or visit our website:

**CALL**  
**225.239.7835**

BRAVE is committed to providing support for people in your community. We provide resources to help prevent participation in violent activities.

If we can't help you, we will find someone who can.

**BRAVEBTR.COM**



**Don't let violence define you.**  
**Determine your own future.**

**JOIN BRAVE**

BATON ROUGE AREA VIOLENCE ELIMINATION

@BRAVEbtr  
 BRAVE Baton Rouge  
[www.bravebtr.com](http://www.bravebtr.com)  
 225-239-7835

**Be BOLD. Live BRAVE.**

If you know something, say something.  
 334-STOP (7687)

BRAVE

CRIME STOPPERS

**Stand Against VIOLENCE**

**LIVE BRAVE**

BATON ROUGE AREA VIOLENCE ELIMINATION  
 CALL (225) 239-7835

CRIME STOPPERS

**FREE** food, fun and GIVEAWAYS

**BRAVE**

**BATON ROUGE AREA VIOLENCE ELIMINATION**

**An Afternoon with BRAVE**  
 Community Fun Day

Saturday, August 3rd • 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
 BREC's Howell Park

**FREE** food, music, fun and giveaways. Meet your community service providers and enjoy free information about BRAVE services.

BREC CRIME STOPPERS ExxonMobil TASK FORCE Carroll's

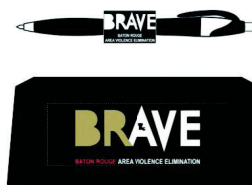
**TOGETHER LET'S STAND AGAINST VIOLENCE**

**Stand Against Violence**

**LIVE BRAVE**

**BATON ROUGE AREA VIOLENCE ELIMINATION**

**TAKE THE FIRST STEP. CALL (225) 239-7835.**



## Appendix C: List of BRAVE Sponsored/Co-Sponsored Community Outreach Events

*\*Events are listed in chronological order*

### 2012

- 3rd Annual "Pack The Park" at Howell park
- Community meeting in 70805
- Community meeting in 70802
- Community policing meeting at Delmont Community Center

### 2013

- Baseball outreach in 70805 and 70802
- Community Meeting in 70805
- Black Inventors Museum at MLK Community Center
- Metro Council Meeting
- Community meeting at the Leo S. Butler Community Center (70802)
- HOPE Fest
- Go Day
- Family Fun Day
- Stop the Violence Hearse Rally
- Juneteenth Festival Gus Young/Downtown
- United Way Health Fair at Istrouma
- Cease for Peace Block Party in Brookstown
- Community Meeting at the Leo S. Butler Community Center (70802)
- Free food giveaway

- Community Meeting
- Delmont Gardens Library Community Meeting
- Youth Alliance Meeting
- Community Meeting at the Leo S. Butler Community Center (70802)
- Family Support and Resource Event @MLK Center
- Community Meeting Delmont Library
- Stop Violence Summit in Washington, DC
- Community Meeting at the Leo S. Butler Community Center (70802)
- Brookstown Clean-up Day!
- Outreach Day
- Weatherization Project
- Faith, Family Funday! At Howell Park
- Gun Buyback

### 2014

- Dr. Martin Luther King Day of Service
- High School Assembly
- Basketball Game (District 7)
- Town Hall Meeting
- Panel Forum
- Community Event: Gardere
- Teen Talk
- Town Hall Meeting at MLK Center
- Community Policing Meeting
- North Baton Rouge Education for Careers Fair
- 70805 Cleanup
- Gun Buyback

- Stop the Violence March
- Cleanup Day
- Exxon Emergency Preparedness Canvass
- National Night Out Against Crime
- Fall Festival
- City of Baton Rouge Violence Prevention and Demonstration
- Open House
- BRPD Community Meeting at Delmont Library
- MY FEST at North Blvd Square
- Resource Fair
- Fundraiser/ Cook Off

## 2015

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- Community Conversation
- MLK Service Day
- Neighborhood Transformation Meeting
- Louisiana Public Broadcasting forum
- BRAVE canvass (70802)
- Gun Buy Back (70802)
- Community March Against Violence
- BR Lives Matter, Panel on Public Safety
- Geaux Big BR - Star Hill Church cleanup
- Turner Industries Tours
- ABC Tour
- Barricades for Play Streets Event (Glen Oaks area)
- Law Enforcement Sunday
- World Changers Event (Gus Young area)
- Angola Prison Museum Tour, with guest speaker Ashanti Witherspoon

- BRAVE will attend Gas for Guns, Zachary Community Center
- Barricades for Play Streets Event (Brookstown area)
- BRAVE Assembly
- Night out against Crime
- Presentation at Mayor's Breakfast
- BRAVE Presentation
- BRAVE Canvass (Bird Station)
- Men of Empowerment Inc.
- Law Enforcement day
- BRAVE Presentation at "Real Talk", Scotlandville High School
- Boo at the Zoo
- Star Hill Community Cleanup day
- BRAVE presentation at LSU Student Union
- Christmas Toy giveaway

## 2016

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- Assembly
- Sorority Event
- Hope Zone Community Crime Forums
- Belaire High Gun Safety
- BR Hope Zone Family Fun night
- Capitol Middle Career Day
- Saia Park Community Easter Egg Hunt
- BR Hope Zone Family Fun Nights
- Presentation: Taking Back Our Community
- Eat and Greet neighborhood clean-up
- Presentation: Guns and Violence awareness
- ICARE Prevention Day
- Crime Victim Event @ Howell Park
- Emmanuel Tabernacle of Praise gathering
- Canvass Immaculate Conception Church
- Live in the "05"
- St. John's Annual Family and Friends Day
- YMCA Baranco Clark Thomas Delpit Drive
- Community event at Park East Apartments
- Last day of school-Keeping the peace

- End of school "Sunday Funday"
- Block Party and Backyard BBQ Eden Park
- Blight Workshop-BR Hope Zone
- Beat the Heat Lunch
- Juneteenth
- Summer Beat the Heat Events
- FYSC Edu Fest
- Balloon release for Fallen Officers at North Blvd Town Square
- Fall Back to School clean up Event
- Old Navy Cortana Kid Safety Event
- Community Outreach at Nairn Park
- Friendship Capitol High Girls Volleyball Team vs
- BRPD and EBRSO Lady Officers
- My Brother's Keeper BR Reads Kickoff
- District 6 Community Meeting
- You Rock Breakfast Conference
- Read to a Child Program
- MLK Community police service

# 2017

- Martin Luther King Day of Service
- Total Wellness Event
- High School Pep Rally
- Stop the Violence Rally
- Community Meeting
- Elementary Field Day
- Community Roundtable
- Crime Victims Event
- ICARE Prevention Day
- BR Hope Zone Community Crime Forums
- Resource Fair

- Battle of the Bands
- Summer Beat the Heat Events
- Back to School Event
- Camp Conquer
- Capital Elementary Field Day
- EduFest
- Pack the Park
- Unstuff the Bus at Westdale Middle
- Glen Oaks Alumni Picnic
- Night Against Crime at Police Headquarters

## Appendix D: Acronyms

**BR:** Baton Rouge

**BRAVE:** Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination

**BRPD:** Baton Rouge Police Department

**CSU:** Crime Strategies Unit

**DA:** District Attorney

**EBR:** East Baton Rouge

**EBRSO:** East Baton Rouge Sheriff Office

**GIU:** Group Intelligence Unit

**GVI:** Group Violence Intervention

**LSU-SREC:** Louisiana State University-Social Research and Evaluation Center

**NNSC:** National Network of Safe Communities

**OJJDP:** Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention

**PSCOP:** Public Safety Common Operational Platform

**VCU:** Violent Crime Unit



GPSC