# National Case Closed Project:

## Self-Assessment Guide for Improving Agency Investigative Outcomes

## Purpose

The National Case Closed Project (NCCP), a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) initiative coordinated by RTI International, supports law enforcement agencies (LEAs) nationwide in improving their violent crime clearance rates. The purpose of this NCCP resource is to guide LEAs in a self-assessment of their organizational capabilities regarding how they respond to violent crimes, specifically in terms of fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations. The goal of this self-assessment is to identify areas within policy and practice that can be addressed to improve investigative outcomes, including clearance rates, victim and witness satisfaction and participation in crime investigations, and resident engagement with the police. A self-assessment provides an understanding of an agency's current state of investigative efficiency and effectiveness, areas for improvement, and options for securing resources and support to meet those operational needs. By completing this assessment, LEA leaders will be better positioned to enact data-informed changes to improve their investigations of violent crimes.

## Introduction

There is tremendous value that can be gained through an organization's self-assessment of its operations and policies. By identifying strengths and weaknesses in their response to violent crimes, agencies that conduct self-assessments can proactively take steps to improve clearance rates and other relevant investigative outcomes, thus ensuring their investigative practices align with current best practices.

Using this guide, agencies can navigate through the self-assessment framework via 5 concrete steps: determine goals, review policies, review cases, interview personnel, and synthesize information (see **Figure 1**). Some modifications may be required, as LEAs vary widely in terms of their degree of urbanization, staffing size, funding, and culture. Although ideally agencies should consider completing the self-assessment steps for each of the three strategic focus areas that are outlined in the Focus Area section, the NCCP team recognizes that this may seem like a daunting task in the face of day-to-day operational responsibilities that law enforcement professionals are tasked with performing. Therefore, if agencies wish to target their efforts around one strategic focus area to begin with, this can still add tremendous value to the agency's approach to investigations. Interested readers can also review assessment reports from several participating NCCP sites on Community of Practice section of the NCCP website (National Case Closed Project: Community of Practice), which can provide additional information on common methods used to assess aspects of an LEA's response to fatal and nonfatal shootings.

**Figure 1. Steps to Use in Conducting a Self-Assessment**

Following this self-assessment, LEAs and their leadership will be able to do the following:

- Understand the NCCP project goals and how this self-assessment guide supports those efforts.
- Establish priority area(s) for self-assessment and evaluation activities.
- Facilitate an agency self-assessment based on determined goals and priority areas.
- Identify and secure additional resources to support the agency moving forward.

## Focus Areas

The primary goal for both the NCCP and this self-assessment guide is to help LEAs increase their clearance rates for violent crime investigations,[1] including fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations. Evidence suggests that LEAs can increase their clearance rates by adopting three strategies:

- **Strategy 1:** Agency Structure and Operations: Consider making changes to the structure and operations of an agency and its investigative units.
- **Strategy 2:** Supervisor and Personnel Performance: Take action to improve investigator and supervisor performance through feedback and suggestions for improvement.
- **Strategy 3:** Collaborative Relationships: Strengthen relationships with victims, witnesses, and community members.

Agencies may consider tailoring their improvement goals to the particular needs of their agency and their community. Agencies may also consider reviewing NCCP's Top 10 Key Recommendations for Improving the Investigation of Fatal and Non-Fatal Shootings. These recommendations were drawn from NCCP site assessments and from prior assessments or reviews conducted as part of U.S. Department of Justice-supported initiatives: Products developed by the National Case Closed Project. They describe common gaps across the nation in how LEAs are organized to effectively investigate violent crimes and therefore form a foundation of key areas that LEAs can review to assess their practices. The recommended areas for LEAs to review are the following:

- Agency policies
- Investigator guidance and supervision
- Investigator workload and caseloads
- Training
- Multidisciplinary coordination
- Leveraging of technology and data
- Prosecutor partnerships
- Community engagement
- Victim and witness support
- Report documentation

## Roles and Responsibilities

For the self-assessment process to be most impactful, consider first defining the roles and responsibilities of those who will be assigned the task of leading self-assessment activities as well as a clearly defining the timeline for these efforts to be completed. It is important for all agency staff to recognize that leadership is engaged in an initiative. Consider messaging from agency leadership to staff explaining that the goal of this self-assessment is to improve investigative clearance rates. To accomplish this goal, agencies must learn more about their operations, including how to support personnel, how resources are allocated, and ultimately, how to ensure that victims of violent crimes and their families are supported.

Each agency knows the workload and capacities of its personnel. The NCCP team recommends that agencies select a self-assessment leader, or "champion," who has the ability, whether by assignment or position, to enforce decision-making at the conclusion of these efforts. Most commonly, an individual with

[1] See this National Case Closed Project resource for the factors that impact clearance rates: National Case Closed Project Flow Model: Agency and Investigative Factors Leading to Case Clearance.

decision-making power has a higher level of responsibility within an agency. Note that those in leadership positions hold power, which can sometimes create a power imbalance among lower-level staff, with staff left feeling that they cannot be honest or engage fully with leadership to voice their concerns. To remedy this challenge, develop a well-rounded team to include a champion and staff at various leadership levels to collaborate with the champion. A diverse self-assessment team allows different perspectives and will validate the process. The self-assessment team should also discuss ways to ensure that it can remain unbiased during the assessment, especially when reviewing areas for which they have responsibility.

As noted previously, the NCCP team recommends a 5-step process for agency self-assessment. The next section highlights Step 1 in this process. The remainder of this document describes these 5 steps.

**Determine Goals**

## Step 1: Determine Agency Goals and Priorities to Guide the Self-Assessment Process

After reviewing the key recommendations listed in the previous section, consider agency priorities before choosing which aspects of investigations to address. Identifying a specific focus area to guide the improvement of investigations can be helpful if agencies feel overwhelmed with competing priority areas.

The NCCP Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) team has provided a suggested structure, or a priority matrix, for agencies to use when determining self-assessment priorities. In **Table 1** the three strategies discussed earlier in this guide are grouped with their corresponding recommendations.

An agency can review this priority matrix to determine which of the strategic areas most align with its goals and begin its self-assessment efforts there. For example, an agency with Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies accreditation that has a fully operational real-time intelligence center and crime analysis program reviewing this guide will less likely need to revise its agency structure or operations. However, that same agency might not have as robust collaborative relationships as outlined under the third strategic area. Therefore, the agency might rank this as its priority area for self-assessment while remaining committed to revisiting the other two strategic areas at a later time.

A similar approach to determining agency priorities for the purposes of self-assessment can be found in the Customized Offerings for Mitigating and Preventing Agency-Specific Stress (COMPASS) Toolkit, a project funded through the Community Oriented Policing Services Office.

### Table 1. Prioritizing Self-Assessment Goals

**Primary Goal**: "For law enforcement agencies to see an increase in clearance rates for fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations." ***This can be accomplished by***…

| Strategy 1: Agency Structure and Operations | Strategy 2: Supervisor and Personnel Performance | Strategy 3: Collaborative Relationships |
|---|---|---|
| Make changes to agency structure and operations:<br>▪ Agency policies<br>▪ Leveraging of technology and data<br>▪ Use of other support units<br>▪ Report documentation<br>▪ Forensics and crime scene processing | Take action to improve supervisor and personnel performance:<br>▪ Investigator activities, guidance, and supervision<br>▪ Investigator case assignment and caseload management<br>▪ Training | Strengthen relationships with victims, witnesses, and community members:<br>▪ Multidisciplinary coordination<br>▪ Prosecutor partnerships<br>▪ Community engagement<br>▪ Victim and witness support |

## Key Considerations for Self-Assessment and Evaluation

### *Strategy 1: Agency Structure and Operations*

Agency structure and operations account for a significant portion of the efficiency and efficacy of investigations. The following is a list of guiding questions that an agency can ask itself while examining this strategic area of the NCCP model to increase its clearance rates. Sample questions are provided in **Appendix A** of this document.

#### Guiding Questions

- What is the policy landscape for agency investigations?
  - Is there a general investigative policy or have things been differentiated based on assignment, responsibilities, and response mechanisms?
  - Are there accompanying standard operating procedures that support and accompany agency policy?
  - What is the pattern of your agency's policy review process?

- What do your agency's data analysis efforts currently look like?

  - Do your agency's operations emphasize crime analysis? How has this been incorporated into your agency's investigative activity and operations planning?

- What do your agency's technological resources currently look like?

  - What technology has your agency leveraged to support violent crime investigations? How do users feel about the technology? Is it being used as intended and is it serving its purpose? What barriers exist to improving the technology's implementation? Is the technology proprietary in nature or publicly available? Is the technology cost-effective?

- What are your agency's current report documentation practices?

  - Is there room for standardization or further guidance to be provided to investigative personnel? For patrol personnel?

- What do report and documentation review practices look like?

  - How often are patrol-level supervisors reviewing initial reports?

  - How often do investigations supervisors review initial documentation, supplemental reports, and other documentation within the investigative case file?

  - Are there consistent systems and methods for documentation or are they dependent on factors like personal preference and historical practice?

- What technology has been leveraged, or could be leveraged, to support your agency's reporting activity?

- What are your agency's crime scene and forensic evidence processes?

  - Can additional mechanisms of support resources be allocated to facilitate efficient collection and processing of forensic evidence, either by way of technology, enhanced staffing, increased training, or other potential resources?

### *Strategy 2: Supervisor and Personnel Performance*

Supervision and personnel considerations are often a top priority for agencies when they consider the recruitment and retention of qualified staff to lead and manage investigations. The following is a list of guiding questions that an agency can ask itself while examining this strategic area of the NCCP model to increase its clearance rates. Additional resources for investigative supervisors and personnel can be found in the National Case Closed Project: Core Standards for Fatal and Nonfatal Shooting Investigations brief.

#### Guiding Questions

- What policies and procedures are in place for the supervision of investigators?

  - Have front-line supervisors of investigators been formally trained on effective supervision strategies?

  - Are there benchmarks or metrics for formal supervision that occur within the supervisor-supervisee relationship?

  - What is the nature of the supervision relationship—is it based on reactive perspectives or is it proactive in nature? How formal is supervision in practice?

- Is investigator caseload considered?

  - If caseloads are an issue, what improvements can be made to either increase capacity or more effectively support high workloads?

- What is the training history for investigative personnel?

  - What training do personnel receive prior to becoming investigators?

  - What training do personnel receive upon becoming investigators?

    - Is training formalized through onboarding training plans or is it simply considered on-the-job training?

- What does ongoing training support look like for investigative personnel, including supervisors?

- How long are investigative personnel on the job before they receive advanced training?

### *Strategy 3: Collaborative Relationships*

Collaborative working relationships are both an integral component of providing comprehensive fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations and crucial for adopting a response posture that is victim centered, trauma informed, and culturally responsive. The following is a list of guiding questions that an agency can ask itself while examining this strategic area of the NCCP model to increase its clearance rates.

#### Guiding Questions

- What are the key external organizations and partners that your agency collaborates with during violent crime investigations? What is the quality of those working relationships, and if the relationship could be improved, what is needed for this to occur? Are there organizations or individuals who could provide support that your agency is not currently coordinating with, and if so, how can new partnerships be formed?
- What is the multidisciplinary team landscape in your community?
  - Is there a surplus or deficit of available partners or organizations?
  - Is there an opportunity for multidisciplinary efforts around fatal and nonfatal shooting response? If so, what key stakeholders and partners can be invited to planning and implementing a multidisciplinary team response?

- Does the agency have the capacity to incorporate victim advocates into the investigative process, whether through law enforcement-based victim services programming or through community partnerships? See the NCCP resource on the role of victim advocates in violent crime investigations: National Case Closed Project: The Role of Victim Services in Shooting Investigations.

- What does the relationship look like with your federal partners (i.e., FBI and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program)?

- What does the relationship look like with your partners in prosecution?

  - Beyond the natural order of law enforcement investigations to prosecution practices, what does the collaborative relationship look like with prosecution? Is there a healthy reciprocity or proactive nature to the relationship?

  - What formal relationship mechanisms, such as mutual aid agreements or memorandums of understanding, are in place to support healthy and concise working relationships?

- What does community engagement look like within your agency structure?

  - Is there a formal programmatic element to address community engagement, such as a Community Outreach Unit?

- What are the mechanisms for victim and witness support in your community?

  - Is there a formalized program, whether in your law enforcement agency or in the community, that specifically focuses on victims and survivors of violent crime?

Review Policies

## Step 2: Review Agency Policies

Policy directives and operating procedures are an integral component of any LEA's day-to-day activities. These directives guide and govern the work of all law enforcement personnel, both sworn and professional staff. Policies can also contribute to comprehensive training and accountability efforts with agency personnel connected to their assigned responsibilities. Best practice assumes that LEAs review policies and procedures on a regular and ongoing basis to ensure that these documents are in keeping with current legislative standards. Although the NCCP team cannot determine the specific pattern or schedule for this policy review, we recommend that policies and procedures are reviewed every 2–3 years. Furthermore, the NCCP team has provided a suggested list of core policies and procedures that may be used to guide agencies in improving their fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations. These include but are not limited to policies that address:

- Patrol response
- Criminal investigations division
- Crime scene investigations
- Death notification procedures
- Communications/public information office
- Victim/witness support services (if available at an agency)

Additional guidance regarding policy review can be found in the National Case Closed Project: Top 10 Recommendations for Improving the Investigation of Fatal and Non-fatal Shootings brief as well as sample guidance given to NCCP sites through their site assessment reports, which can be found on the recommendations page of the NCCP website: Products developed by the National Case Closed Project.

Review Cases

## Step 3: Review Cases

Reviewing investigative case files is another beneficial self-assessment activity that agencies can perform. A case file review can identify issues in investigative practices that may affect case efficiencies or even outcomes. The NCCP TTA team suggests that an agency take a diverse approach to the case review process by reviewing a representative number of both fatal and nonfatal shooting case files (e.g., 15 fatal shooting and 15 nonfatal shooting cases) and reviewing both open and cleared cases. It may also be beneficial to review the case files of both new and more tenured investigators. During the case file review, LEA personnel should pay close attention to the shared characteristics among the cases. Although the case file review process can serve as an accountability function to evaluate individual performance, the purpose of the case file review is to better understand what activities, resources, and partners are consistently being applied to investigations to evaluate whether any gaps exist in the department's approach. Another key element for personnel to consider during case review would be whether there are any common features about the agency's response that either need to be addressed, such as a training deficit, or perhaps replicated, such as leveraging technology during the investigations. The overarching goal of this case review process is to determine the extent to which investigative policies were followed; the partnerships, support staff, and technologies that were used; and the level to which documentation practices were followed. Findings from this case file review should be interpreted in conjunction with information gained from other self-assessment activities such as staff interviews (see Step 4) to identify any discrepancies in findings. If desired, agencies can review additional resources and guidance from the NCCP website, such as the NCCP Flow Model: Agency and Investigative Factors Leading to Case Clearance, to aid in their review.

### Case Review Guidelines

- Assess the initial incident report and the overall investigation, including investigative actions such as following up on leads, conducting interviews, and providing victim/witness support.
- Review the available evidence. Determine the location, status, and probative value of evidence in the case.
- Review supplements for all identified witnesses.
- Review any crime analysis for the case. Assess whether there are connections or similarities to other cases (via forensic evidence or facts of the case).
- Review suspect information and any whether the identification of suspects is still outstanding.
- Review the status of the victim(s), witnesses, and/or surviving family members (in the case of a fatal shooting investigation), taking into consideration their experience during the initial investigation.

**Interview Personnel**

## Step 4: Conduct Personnel Interviews

It is imperative that leadership understand the experiences of agency personnel, both sworn and professional staff, when it comes to responding to violent crime. The NCCP team recommends incorporating personnel interviews as a part of an agency's self-assessment process. When considering which personnel to interview, agency leadership should consider all the individuals who might be involved in responding to fatal and nonfatal shooting victims, survivors, and their families. At a minimum, this will likely include criminal investigations division personnel and their respective chain of command, but interviews can also extend to property technicians, crime scene investigators, records staff, and victim services personnel (see **Table 2** for a sample list of personnel that was taken from a recent NCCP site assessment).

Interviewees may not feel comfortable being candid during these interviews for fear of backlash or other forms of retribution. Agency leadership should affirm before and during the interviews that all information shared will be kept confidential and is for the purposes of understanding the experiences of staff in their respective roles as well as to identify potential gaps in resources and support. Topics to explore during each personnel interview can include but are not limited to roles and responsibilities during fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations, training for their position, resources required for day-to-day activities, caseload considerations, and supervision experiences. Sample questions for personnel interviews have been provided in Appendix A of this guide. They include general questions that the NCCP team recommends LEAs ask of every staff member, as well as unit- or position-specific questions. Finally, agencies can review additional resources associated with personnel interviews in the NCCP site assessment reports found on the NCCP Recommendations page of the NCCP website.

**Table 2. Sample List of Agency Personnel Interviewed**

| Agency Affiliation | Role | Number |
|---|---|---|
| Greensboro Police Department | Command Staff | 5 |
| Greensboro Police Department | CID Command | 4 |
| Greensboro Police Department | Office of Community Engagement | 1 |
| Greensboro Police Department | Criminal Intelligence | 1 |
| U.S. Attorney's Office | Assistant U.S. Attorney | 1 |
| Greensboro Police Department | CID Supervisors | 4 |
| Greensboro Police Department | Street Crime Unit | 3 |
| Greensboro Police Department | CAP and Homicide Detectives | 7 |
| District Attorney's Office | Assistant District Attorneys | 2 |
| Greensboro Police Department | Forensics/CSI | 2 |
| Greensboro Police Department | Crime Analysts | 5 |
| Greensboro Police Department (Contract) | Victim Advocate | 1 |
| Greensboro Police Department | Computer Crimes | 2 |
| Greensboro Police Department | Public Information Manager | 1 |
| Greensboro Police Department | Patrol | 5 |
| Crime Stoppers, GPD | Crime Stoppers Coordinator, Asst. Crime Stoppers Coordinator | 2 |
| Community Organizations | Various Leaders & Volunteers | 5 |

**Synthesize Information**

## Step 5: Synthesize Information Collected for Action Planning

After completing the review of all pertinent self-assessment activities, agency leadership should meet to organize, discuss, and communicate about both lessons learned from the self-assessment and next steps for addressing issues identified during the assessment. For an example action plan from another BJA-funded project, the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI), see **Appendix B**. Recall the focus area(s) and initial goals set at the onset of the self-assessment. Next, consider short- and long-term goals and the required resources to implement them. Finally, consider dissemination strategies, such as a written report or presentation to staff. Additional factors to consider during the action planning process may include an overall timeline for implementation, the ways in which action steps may differ by role or unit, what resources and/or messaging is needed for success, what grants are available to support the agency in implementing changes based on the assessment's findings, and who should assume the role of "self-assessment champion" in coordinating these activities if the champion becomes unavailable. Agency leadership may also consider developing a regular feedback mechanism for staff to provide input at regular intervals during the action planning development and implementation period. These feedback check-ins are also a great opportunity for the self-assessment champion to assess progress on the action plan steps over the long-term. Finally, consider sharing the findings and action plan with external collaborators, such as the prosecutor's office, as a means of building transparency, accountability, and trust between organizations.

Below, we provide an example of how a hypothetical police department could conduct a self-assessment and use those findings to improve its response to violent crime.

## Example Police Department Self-Assessment

Leadership at Anytown Police Department was not satisfied with its department's major violent crime clearance rates. Given limited time and resources, along with a recent spike in nonfatal shootings in its community, leadership decided to focus its attention on assessing its department's response to nonfatal shootings to understand how the department could best improve its clearance rate for this crime type.

Leadership decided to invest in a complete self-assessment to understand whether there were gaps in its agency's structure and operations, supervisor and personnel performance, and collaborative relationships that may be negatively impacting nonfatal shooting clearance rates (Strategies 1, 2, and 3, respectively, from the Step 1 section of this guide). As mentioned, agencies with limited resources can conduct a narrower assessment.

After reviewing departmental policies related to responding to and investigating nonfatal shootings (Step 2), department leadership concluded that the department's policies were clear, detailed, and up to date and provided the necessary guidance to all relevant personnel. Next, leadership asked an analyst to select 10 nonfatal shooting cases from earlier in the year and requested that the supervisor of the nonfatal shooting unit provide them with the complete files for those cases to review (Step 3). In the process, department leadership learned that the analyst had difficulty completing this task because the department did not track whether an offense was a nonfatal shooting. A review of the 10 case files suggested that although detectives do a good job of using investigative tools and resources, there seemed to be a lack of effort dedicated to persuading reluctant victims and witnesses to participate in the investigation. Typically, the case files suggested that if the victim or witness didn't answer the phone after a few attempts and there were no other leads, the case was suspended.

Interviews with personnel involved in the nonfatal shooting response (Step 4) confirmed this finding from the case file review. Investigators believe their efforts to obtain the cooperation of nonfatal shooting victims and witnesses will not be successful. Moreover, several interviewees felt that the current nonfatal shooting investigators lacked the soft skills necessary to gain the assistance of reluctant victims and witnesses. Interviews also revealed that investigators struggle to complete activities that crime analysts could more easily accomplish if they were more involved in shooting investigations and that crime analysts had a desire to support investigations.

Based on these findings, agency leadership took several steps to improve the department's nonfatal shooting response. First, leadership assigned a staff member to identify one or more trainings that could be offered to nonfatal shooting detectives and their supervisors to improve their ability to work with victims and witnesses and gain their trust and participation in investigations. Second, leadership addressed issues with crime analysis, including developing a method of tracking nonfatal shootings as a unique offense type (see Tracking Nonfatal Shootings and Other Violent Gun Crimes in Your Law Enforcement Agency) and procedures for better utilizing crime analysts in violent crime investigations. A member of the department's leadership volunteered to oversee these activities and write an email to staff and external partners notifying them of these findings and the changes the department planned to take to improve its response.

## Conclusion

Embarking on a self-assessment process can be burdensome, and organizational change often takes longer than anticipated. Importantly, the self-assessment process signals to agency staff that leadership is invested in the success of the organization. Further, staff who feel that their feedback is valued by the organization often experience renewed commitment and engagement to their agency.

Remember to celebrate even the smallest successes during this process. The outcomes of a self-assessment process can vary widely from increased case processing or clearance rates to reduced staff turnover in the investigations department or even a boost in overall morale. Recall that organizational change takes time and effort but is well worth the investment.

The NCCP team hopes this guide will be useful for agencies looking to better support their investigative staff as well as improve their fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations. For additional resources that can support post-assessment action planning, please visit the NCCP Toolkit.

**More Information**

If you have questions or want more information on the National Case Closed Project, please contact us.

NCCP Helpdesk

NCCP Website

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## Appendix A: Personnel Interview Guide Sample Questions

There should be some questions that appear in each of the personnel interviews, regardless of the individual's assigned responsibility or job duties. These include:

- Could you start by telling me a little about yourself, such as how long you have worked in the field and for your agency and what roles you have had there? How long have you been in your current role?

- Please describe your job duties and responsibilities.

- What role do you have in the investigation of fatal and nonfatal shootings?

For job-specific questions, please see the following list of sample questions.

- **Investigative Supervisors**
  - Describe any training and education you have received in the investigation and supervision of fatal and nonfatal shooting cases/unit.
  - Describe your documentation practices for writing your investigative reports.

- Describe your process for evaluating and assessing your investigators' work product.

- What is your agency's selection process for supervisors in your unit? How is your unit viewed within your department and how does your department support the unit?

- How do you communicate internally within your unit and agency?

- How do you communicate with internal and external partners?

- What type of internal or external resources would be helpful for your violent crime response to increase case clearance and reduce crime?

- **Investigators**
  - Describe any training and education you have received in the investigation and supervision of fatal and nonfatal shooting cases/unit.
  - Describe your documentation practices for writing your investigative reports.
  - Describe the case management process for your unit.
  - What is your agency's selection process for detectives in your unit? How is your unit viewed within your department and how does your department support the unit?
  - How is evidence and crime scene processing handled?
  - Let's talk about community participation or willingness to come forward with information. Is this an issue? What does the community level of participation in investigations look like? What are the main challenges and barriers?

- Describe response practices or things your unit does well.

- **Patrol Officers**
  - Describe what you do when responding to and arriving on the scene of a homicide or nonfatal shooting.

  - Describe any follow-up activities for which you are responsible (e.g., crime scene assistance, assisting or briefing detectives, contacting lab, advocacy, additional witness interviews, follow-up with suspects, investigatory stops).

  - Describe how and when detectives get involved in the call or investigation.

  - Describe any training and education you have received specific to homicide, crime scene investigations, interviewing, and legal issues.

- Do you communicate or interact with detectives in the homicide/nonfatal shooting unit on a regular basis and during ongoing cases?

- Does your agency provide clear patrol response policy for homicide and nonfatal shooting investigations?

- What are some tools or resources that would assist you in responding to homicide and nonfatal shooting investigations?

- **Victim Advocates**
  - Describe any written policies or guidelines your unit has that direct your response to these crimes.

  - Describe any follow-up activities and services you provide in fatal and nonfatal shooting investigations after your initial response.

- Describe your communication with the violent crime unit detectives.

- Do you communicate with other disciplines involved in fatal and nonfatal shooting cases?

- What things do you think work well and where is there room for improvement as it relates to your response to shootings and violent crimes and support for victims and families?

- **Public Information**
  - Do you have an agency policy or protocol when working with the community and media? Describe this policy.

  - Describe the community organizations you work with, meetings you attend, and communications you have with community organizations and the media. Describe any strategies you use when engaging the community and media after a fatal or nonfatal shooting. Is there a strategy for increasing witness cooperation and/or public tips in shooting investigations?

- Describe the types of communication modes and media you use to communicate with the community.

- What are some ideas you have for improving the work you do and the relationships you have with the community and media?

- **Crime Intelligence Analyst**

  - Describe any ongoing or follow-up activities for violent crime or homicide cases you engage in after your initial response.

  - Describe any training, education, and certifications you have received in intelligence or crime analysis.

  - Discuss the types of databases, technology, and tools you use and the type of analysis you conduct to support ongoing homicides and shooting investigations.

- Describe your routine for communicating with the homicide and nonfatal shooting detectives. Do you work with any other units in the department?

- Do you work with any organizations outside of your agency for shooting cases?

- How do you communicate with outside agencies, intelligence centers, or other related disciplines?

- What are areas you believe would help improve your job and the shooting investigative process?

## Appendix B: Example Action Plan Template

**Goal:**

**Objectives:**

**Benefit to your agency:**

| | Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Time Frame |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |

| | Outside Partners | Potential Obstacles | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | **Target Date for Completion:** | |

**Goal:**

**Objectives:**

**Benefit to your agency:**

| | Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Time Frame |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |

| | Outside Partners | Potential Obstacles | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | **Target Date for Completion:** | |

**Goal:**

**Objectives:**

**Benefit to your agency:**

| | Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Time Frame |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |

| | Outside Partners | Potential Obstacles | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | **Target Date for Completion:** | |

| Goal: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|

**Objectives:**

**Benefit to your agency:**

| | Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Time Frame |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |

| | Outside Partners | Potential Obstacles | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | Target Date for Completion: | |

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