

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Juvenile Firearm and Gang Offenders

Substitute Senate Bill 5883, Section 203(10)
(Chapter 1, Laws of 2017, 3rd Special Session)

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All youth stories were collected through the 2017 Pursuit for Change initiative, in partnership with the Department of Social and Health Services' Juvenile Rehabilitation and the Office of Juvenile Justice, and are used with permission from the project. The authors are grateful for the courage of the youth who shared their stories with the initiative.

Executive Summary

In 2017, 3rd Special Session, the Washington State Legislature enacted Substitute Senate Bill 5883, Section 203(10) (Chapter 1, Laws of 2017, hereinafter “SSB 5883”), which appropriated funds for the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to:

coordinate the examination of data associated with juvenile gang and firearm offenses. The review of data must include information from the administrative office of the courts, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the office of financial management—education research data center, the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs, the caseload forecast council, and the department of corrections. For the purpose of carrying out the data review, named organizations are authorized to share data to include details of criminal arrest and conviction data. The department shall report to the governor and the appropriate legislative committees by February 1, 2018, with any recommendations for public policy that increases public safety.

The following report examines juvenile gang and firearm offenders in the 2016 calendar year. Due to the limitations on the reliability and validity of juvenile gang data, the statistical analysis focuses specifically on juveniles adjudicated for possession or theft of a firearm. Firearm offenses explain a small proportion of total juvenile offenses, accounting for 2.1% of juvenile offenders adjudicated in 2016. Although firearm offenses account for a small proportion of total juvenile offenses, males and youth of color are overrepresented among firearm offenses and this disproportionality exists even when compared to all juvenile offenders.

In an attempt to better understand the risk factors associated with firearm offending, this analysis looked at school discipline and prior criminal behavior. Youth who committed a firearm offense during calendar year 2016 had a school discipline rate of 2.3 incidents per youth in academic year 2014-2015, compared to 1.7 for youth who did not commit a firearm offense. Disparities also exist in criminal history as 56.0% of juvenile firearm offenders had one or more prior contacts with the juvenile system compared to 28.9% of non-firearm offenders.

In addition to the above analysis, a data consortium was held in November 2017 to identify sources of relevant data and promote collaborative relationships among state agencies. A summary of key findings and future directions is presented at the end of this report. This report represents an initial effort to better define and understand these populations, but further analyses must be carried out to understand additional factors associated with these offenses and the interventions and programs that can be enacted to prevent them.

Background

Due to concerns over the prevalence of juvenile gang involvement and firearm offending, the 2017 Washington State Legislature as part of SSB 5883 requested an ad hoc examination of data associated with juvenile gang and firearm offenses. This report is in response to that request.

National Trends in Juvenile Gang and Firearm Offending

In the past decade, the number of youth identified as gang affiliated has increased nationally, as have the number of fatal firearm offenses committed by youth^{1,2}. Although youth make up a relatively small proportion of total firearm offenses, in young adults ages 10 – 24, homicide was the third leading cause of death in 2014, and among homicide victims 86% were killed with a firearm³. Homicides are more common in males than females, and display racial and ethnic disparities as well. In African American males ages 10 - 24, homicide is the leading cause of death, and is second for Hispanic and White males of the same age³. In total, youth had 1,458 firearm related fatalities in 2015, representing a 9.6% increase from the previous year⁴. On a more positive note, the proportion of students reporting carrying a gun at school has decreased steadily since 1993 to 5.3% in 2015⁵.

Gang affiliation presents a similar picture and is of particular interest to those working with youth. According to a recent study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health, at any given time two percent of youth in the United States are affiliated with gangs⁶. While estimates can vary widely, according to the National Youth Gang Survey, youth constitute approximately 35% – 40% of total gang members¹. Gang membership peaks around age 16 and declines precipitously thereafter⁷. This can present a number of developmental challenges for youth as gang affiliation has been associated with increases in criminal activity and decreases in educational attainment and future employment opportunities^{8,9}.

While often considered an “urban” issue, gang violence has a far-reaching impact. According to the National Gang Center, the prevalence of youth in gangs is higher in smaller cities and rural communities than in larger cities where gangs are better established¹⁰. Therefore, while urban areas of Washington may have more visible gang problems, addressing juvenile gangs is a statewide concern.

While youth gang members commit a disproportionate share of both violent and non-violent offenses, it is important to recognize that not all juvenile gang members commit firearm offenses and that not all youth who commit a firearm offense are gang members¹¹. While these two behaviors are correlated (gang members are more than twice as likely as non-gang members to own a gun for protection and to carry their guns outside the home) they can also occur distinct from each other¹². Therefore, eliminating gang membership will not result in the elimination of firearm offenses just as eliminating firearm offenses will not result in the elimination of gang membership. Furthermore, there are other destructive behaviors and serious needs associated with gang

membership besides firearm offending. Reducing gang membership would likely result in a reduction of other criminal behaviors as well as protect youth from experiencing some of the traumatic events of gang membership⁸. Intervening in juvenile gang and firearm offending can, and should be, a coordinated approach that also includes distinct efforts.

Addressing Juvenile Gang and Firearm Offending

In order to reduce gang involvement and the use of firearms by juveniles, a two track intervention approach is necessary. One track focuses on primary prevention, determining how to prevent youth from ever joining a gang or using a firearm for illegal purposes. The other track focuses on tertiary prevention by identifying how to best prevent youth who have committed a firearm offense or who are gang involved from committing future offenses. This report focuses on the former, while acknowledging the need for further research and development of options for the latter.

Voices of Youth

“When I was 8, my dad jumped me into the gang that I’m from. Now, I only would see my dad so often. It wasn’t easy for me. After a while I just gave up and I brought my lil bro (sic) around my older homies. He eventually got jumped in....” –Raphael

Historically the juvenile justice system has worked in a silo attempting to address issues of juvenile gang involvement and firearm offenses. Even within the justice system, research and reporting on juvenile firearm offending and juvenile gang involvement in Washington State has been disjointed and not produced on a regular basis. No single entity has been directed by the Legislature to provide regular reports on this topic, so existing reports are generally in response to a specific research or policy question and are not generalizable to the needs of the entire state. Even with clarity on whose role it is to report on juvenile firearm offenses and juvenile gang membership, limitations in what data is currently collected and lack of clear definitions of key variables prevent consistent reporting.

While efforts have been made to address juvenile gang involvement and firearm use, inconsistent definitions and unreliable measurements have led to mixed results across the country. Definitions and reporting systems vary by state and even between jurisdictions within the same state, making comparisons difficult. As stated by the Department of Justice, “Communities must recognize that the ways in which gangs are defined will, to a large degree, determine the extent of the gang problem in a neighborhood”¹³. For example, although there are legislative definitions of “criminal street gang associate or member” (RCW 9.94A.030, 9.101.010) and “felony firearm offense” (RCW 9.41.010), these definitions are broad and are not used in the limited data collection that occurs. Accurately identifying gang affiliation and membership is practically challenging both nationally and locally and has resulted in limited and unreliable sources in Washington State¹³. Further clarification in regards to reporting

these offenses, including efforts to standardize these definitions and develop a national practice for labeling offenses, will be necessary to facilitate the discussion of these issues. Because of the lack of valid and reliable person-level gang data in Washington, this report does not include an examination of data associated with juvenile gang members.

DEFINITION OF A “CRIMINAL STREET GANG” (RCW 9.101.010 / 9.94A.030)

Any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal, having a common name or common identifying sign or symbol, having as one of its primary activities the commission of criminal acts, and whose members or associates individually or collectively engage in or have engaged in a pattern of criminal street gang activity.

Legislation

Policy leaders are increasingly seeing the need for collaboration across areas to better address the behaviors that result in these type of offenses as well as to mitigate their impact if they occur. In 2017, the Legislature passed SSB 5883, which encouraged this broader approach at problem solving by requiring the “examination of data associated with juvenile gang and firearm offenses” that includes data from multiple stakeholders. In particular, an understanding of juvenile gang and firearm offenders’ involvement in the child welfare system and disciplinary issues in school can shine some light on the risks and needs of this population.

In order to meet the reporting requirements of SSB 5883, DSHS’s Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) conducted two projects. First, JR partnered with state agencies with access to person level data to complete a descriptive analysis of juvenile firearm offenders. As previously mentioned, due to the poor quality of data collected on gang membership this was excluded from analysis and reporting even though the intent of the legislation was to include reporting on juvenile gang membership. Secondly, JR convened a consortium of state agencies who held data relevant to juveniles. This consortium resulted in an inventory of current data being collected across state agencies that could possibly be used for future reporting on juvenile firearm and gang offending. In addition, research questions to better understand juvenile firearm offending and juvenile gang membership were identified, as well as opportunities for collaboration and future data collection.

This focus on partnering with entities outside of juvenile justice is supported by the research literature. National research indicates that youth who have a history of child welfare involvement or who have more serious forms of school discipline, particularly suspensions and expulsions, are significantly more likely to interact with the juvenile justice system than youth who are not ¹⁵. Research also indicates that early intervention

can help to prevent juvenile delinquency, so a better understanding of the risks and needs of youth who have committed firearm offenses is necessary to begin to develop targeted prevention and interventions¹⁶. As Governor Jay Inslee noted, “Its clear there’s not one single solution – it’s our combined effort that will end the scourge of gang violence in our communities”¹⁷ This report is intended to be a preliminary step towards identifying areas to target for solutions.

Current State of Juvenile Firearm Offenses in Washington

To get a better understanding of the scope of juvenile firearm offenses in Washington State, analysis of the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) was completed. NIBRS collects data from police departments across the United States and is stored in publicly accessible digital archives known as the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) hosted by the University of Michigan²⁰. These datasets are an excellent source for statewide data on incidents of juvenile crime, but do have some limitations. Because NIBRS reporting is voluntary, NIBRS data only covers areas representing 85% of the Washington population. Given this limitation, an analysis of the 2015 juvenile offender data from Washington State found there were at least 613 juvenile offenders who committed a firearm-involved offense in 2015. More than a third of those offenders (37%) used their firearm in connection with a murder/manslaughter, kidnapping/abduction, sodomy, or robbery offense. While the true number of juvenile firearm offenders may be higher than 613 due to some areas of Washington not reporting data to NIBRS, this is the most comprehensive, easily available source of data and helps us begin to understand the scope of juvenile firearm offending.¹

State Agency Analysis: Developing a Research Cohort

The Washington State Center for Court Research (WSCCR) was tasked with developing a cohort of youth adjudicated of a firearm offense in calendar year 2016 and a control cohort of youth adjudicated during the same timeframe for non-firearm related offenses. In order to accomplish this it was necessary to first identify which offenses should be classified as “firearm offenses”. Staff at WSCCR found that this was not possible because court data does not contain fields to capture offense details outside of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) statute and the charge description, as entered by the court. Therefore, if neither the RCW nor the charge description specifically uses language referring to a “firearm,” “gun,” “pistol,” “rifle,” or “shooting”, it was not possible to know if a firearm was part of that offense.

This limitation necessitated a change in the scope in the design of the firearm offender cohort, changing it from all juvenile firearm offenders to juveniles with either weapon possession or a weapon theft offense since the majority of offenses (95%) identified in

²⁰ National Archive of Criminal Justice Data. National Incident-Based Reporting System, 2015. Extract Files. ICPSR36851-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2017-08-16. <http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36851.v1>.

this cohort fit under one of these categories. Because a number of offenses that involved a firearm - especially violent offenses such as homicide, robbery, and assault – were not identified in the data they are excluded from the firearm offender cohort and may, in fact, be included in the comparison group. While it is known from other sources that the majority of homicide offenses involve a firearm, the WSCCR research team did not feel that there was adequate information in the data to generally attribute a certain offense or class of offenses as “firearm offenses” without explicit identification that a firearm was present during the commission of the crime ¹⁹. While this data limitation reduced the ability to study all juveniles with firearm offenses, it did narrow the scope to an important population to target for intervention: youth illegally in possession of a firearm but not using it in the commission of a crime. These youth are at high risk to use a firearm in the future but at the time of this data collection have been identified by law enforcement for possessing, not utilizing, a firearm ²¹.

Using this criteria, WSCCR identified 209 youth under age of 18 who were adjudicated in calendar year 2016 for a firearm-related offense (defined for all subsequent analyses as possession or theft of a firearm) and a comparison group of 9,578 young offenders adjudicated for other non-firearm crimes during that same timeframe. Only charges that resulted in a conviction, deferral, or diversion during 2016 were included. Charges for the comparison group were filtered to identify the most serious disposed charge for any offense date, case identification number, and/or adjudication date, resulting in one charge per criminal justice cycle.

Voices of Youth

“One thing in particular that I was mentally and emotionally attracted to about my brothers was that they were some banged out Crips. The way that my brothers gang banged was so perfect to me. The way they lived is how I wanted to grow up and be so bad.... I just want it to be clear that being piss poor is not the reason I chose the life I did. I chose this life cuz (sic) I really felt I had shoes to fill. My brothers were factors in the streets of Tacoma.” – Kevin

State Agency Analysis: Results

Demographic Characteristics

In 2016 a total of 209 offenders were adjudicated for a firearm possession or theft, representing 2.1% of juvenile offenders adjudicated during that year. The majority of these youth were male (95%) and youth of color (61%). Males were overrepresented among juvenile firearm offenders, as compared to all other juvenile offenders (66% male), indicating that even among a male dominated activity such as juvenile criminal behavior, males are even more overrepresented in firearm offenses. Similarly, while youth of color are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system (44% of juvenile offenders compared to 33% of the population of Washington State), they are even more overrepresented when considering firearm offenses ²².

Risk Factors

Understanding a youth's social context and their interactions with state systems prior to a firearm related offense can help us better understand the needs of these youth and can inform the development of interventions to mitigate these risks. It also helps to better identify which youth are at highest risk. Key risk factors include, but are not limited to prior justice system involvement, child welfare involvement, injury, and school discipline. Using the cohort developed by WSCCR, the DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division (RDA), and the Education Research Data Center (ERDC) matched the roster of youth to their records to provide information on the systems needs of these youth.

Justice System Involvement

There are consistent differences between the criminal histories of juvenile firearm offenders and non-firearm juvenile offenders across all types of criminal history. Among juvenile firearm offenders, 56% have one or more prior dispositions compared to 29% of juvenile non-firearm offenders. This pattern holds when looking exclusively at misdemeanor criminal history, with 44% of juvenile firearm offenders having one or more misdemeanor disposition, as opposed to 26% of juvenile non-firearm offenders. The same is also true for felony criminal history, with 33% of juvenile firearm offenders having one or more prior felony dispositions, while only 8% of juvenile non-firearm offenders had at least one prior felony disposition.

The distribution of juvenile offenders by age at their first court disposition is similar for firearm and non-firearm offenders. In general, the percentages increase consistently until age 15 and then drop for 16 and 17 year old juvenile offenders. The difference between the two groups appears to be a slightly earlier peak in age at first disposition for juvenile firearm offenders (age 14) versus juvenile non-firearm offenders (age 15). This supports the provision of targeted services to youth interacting with the justice system at an early age which is a risk factor for subsequent and more intense justice system involvement.

Although prior contact with JR is low for all juvenile offenders, a significantly higher proportion of youth with firearm adjudications had a prior commitment to JR compared to youth without a firearm-related offense (9% compared to 2%, $p < .05$, Table 1).

Table 1: Contact with Juvenile Rehabilitation

	Youth with Firearm Offense n=209	Youth without Firearm Offense n=9,578
JR institution commitment*	9%	2%
Two or more JR institution commitments	2%	1%

* $p < .05$

Child Welfare Involvement

The proportion of youth with a history of any involvement with child welfare was high, but comparable, for youth with firearm-related offenses (60%) and youth without firearm-related offenses (57%, Table 2). The rates were not significantly different and indicate the high level of need for justice involved youth, regardless of whether their offense is categorized as a firearm offense.

Of the 209 youth identified as firearm offenders, 21 had a history of dependency. This represented 10% of the overall population of juvenile firearm offenders and is similar to the percentage of all juvenile offenders in the state with a dependency history (9.7%).

Table 2: Child Welfare Involvement

	Youth with Firearm Offense n=209	Youth without Firearm Offense n=9,578
Child Welfare involvement	60%	57%
Out-of-home placement (non-JR)	16%	14%
Two or more out-of-home placements (non-JR)	4%	4%
Congregate care placement (non-JR)	3%	3%
Average months in out-of-home placement (non-JR)	4.5	3.4

*p < .05

Utilizing State Services

Justice involved youth have a high utilization rate of state services. All youth adjudicated in 2016 had high rates of mental health treatment needs (71% of youth with firearm-related offenses and 69% of youth without firearm-related offenses). In some areas the utilization is even higher for youth with firearm offenses compared to youth without. Youth with firearm-related adjudications were significantly more likely to have substance use disorder treatment needs (53%), compared to youth without firearm-related offenses (32%, p<.05). Youth with firearm-related adjudications were significantly more likely to have received Economic Services Administration assistance [Basic Food or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)] prior to their offense (82% compared to 76%, p<.05). This difference in utilization possibly indicates a higher prevalence of economic instability in this population, supported by the fact that 17% of youth with firearm offenses who receive Basic Food experienced homelessness in the prior two years compared to 13% of youth with other offense types.

Injury

Youth with firearm-related adjudications had a higher rate of treatment for injuries in their lifetime (135 encounters per 1,000 member months versus 111 among youth without firearm-related adjudications), but did not find higher rates of emergency department use or hospitalizations (Table 3). None of these differences were statistically significant.

Table 3: Injury and Hospitalization

	Youth with Firearm Offense n=164	Youth without Firearm Offense n=7,087
Outpatient Emergency Department visits per 1,000 member months	9.9	13.1
months	0.12	0.79
Treatment for Injury per 1,000 member months	135	111

*p < .05

School Participation and Discipline

Table 4 shows the number of youth with excused and/or unexcused full and part-time absences. Youth with a firearm offense were more likely to have unexcused absences than youth with no firearm offense, whereas youth with a firearm offense were more likely to have excused absences. While both groups have high rates of school absence, the higher rates of unexcused absences in the firearm group may indicate less parental involvement relative to youth with other offending behavior.

Table 4: Count of Absence Type by Offense Group

	Youth with Firearm Offense n=209		Youth without Firearm Offenses n=9,578	
	Count	%	Count	%
Excused Full-Time	164	79.2%	7,972	84.7%
Excused Part-Time	124	59.9%	6,811	72.3%
Total Excused	169	81.6%	8,223	87.3%
Unexcused Full-Time	148	71.5%	5,691	60.4%
Unexcused Part-Time	136	65.7%	5,984	63.6%
Total Unexcused	162	78.3%	7,050	74.9%

*Youth can be in more than one category, therefore percent does not add to 100.

Chronic absence can result in a truancy filing with the state. Among the juvenile firearm offenders, 77 (37%) had a lifetime history of truancy, compared to 32% of all juvenile offenders in Washington State in 2016.

Looking at school discipline incidents in the academic year prior to the offense cited in this study, those youth with a firearm offense had a combined total of 468 school discipline incidents in academic year 2014-2015, which equates to 2.3 incidents per youth. Youth without a firearm offense had a combined total of 15,745 school discipline incidents in academic year 2014-2015, which equates to 1.7 incidents per youth.

Table 5 shows the number of youth per each school discipline incident type. Youth with a firearm offense were more likely to fall into nearly all the school discipline incident categories than youth without a firearm offense. While these numbers are too low to draw many conclusions, it is valuable to note that a higher proportion of youth with firearm offenses were disciplined for violence and for weapons possession. Of incidents that resulted in a formal intervention, youth with firearm offense had higher proportions of interventions, particularly of interventions that removed them from the classroom (Table 6).

Table 5: Count of School Discipline Incidents by Offense Group

	Youth with Firearm Offense		Youth without Firearm	
	n=209		n=9,578	
	Count	%	Count	%
Tobacco	10	4.8%	361	3.8%
Alcohol	4	1.9%	126	1.3%
Fighting w/o Major Injury	22	10.6%	785	8.3%
Violence w/o Major Injury	13	6.3%	356	3.8%
Violence w/ Major Injury	5	2.4%	54	0.6%
Possession of a Weapon	10	4.8%	190	2.0%
Other	54	26.1%	1,696	18.0%
Serious Bodily Injury	0	0.0%	5	0.1%
Marijuana	24	11.6%	621	6.6%
Illicit Drug	4	1.9%	186	2.0%
Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying	20	9.7%	614	6.5%
Failure to Cooperate	34	16.4%	1,247	13.2%
Disruptive Conduct	43	20.8%	1,518	16.1%

**Youth can be in more than one discipline category.*

Table 6: Count of Intervention Type by Offense Group

	n=209		n=9,578	
	Count	%	Count	%
Emergency Expulsion	5	2.4%	79	0.8%
Expulsion	10	4.8%	164	1.7%
In School Suspension	29	14.0%	923	9.8%
Long-Term Suspension	29	14.0%	511	5.4%
No Intervention	8	3.9%	372	4.0%
Other	38	18.4%	1,837	19.5%
Short-Term Suspension	86	41.5%	3,000	31.9%

**Youth can be in more than one intervention type category.*

While there is a great deal more to learn about firearm offenders, both those adjudicated for possession or theft as well as those who used a firearm in the commission of a crime, this summary information begins to paint a picture of some of the common characteristics. Youth who are justice system involved have many experiences and risks that make their success more challenging. Firearm offenders appear to experience these risks at an even greater level.

Future Opportunities for Research to Better Understand Juvenile Firearm and Gang Offenses

Summary of Data Inventory

In an effort to increase inter-agency collaboration as well as better define and address the challenges identified above, a Firearm and Gang Data Consortium was held to bring together researchers and develop recommendations for future practices. In total, 11 state agencies were represented at the consortium and 12 agencies responded to a Data Inventory Survey describing the availability and location of relevant data. All 12 agency responses were aggregated into a Data Inventory by JR staff, which functioned to identify the type of data each agency maintains, the availability of that data to outside agencies, and a person of contact within each agency. Through gathering this information, the data inventory aids in increasing the efficiency of the current system by reducing duplicative efforts and creating a more comprehensive scope for data collection. The inventory was reviewed for accuracy and approved by all agencies involved, and can be found in Appendix A.

Consortium Meeting Summary

State Senate Bill 5883 required a review of data from multiple named stakeholders. On November 8, 2017, JR convened a stakeholders meeting in Olympia (Appendix B: Meeting Agenda). Representatives from Juvenile Rehabilitation, the Administrative Office of the Courts, Children's Administration, the Caseload Forecast Council, the Department of Early Learning, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Health, the Education Research Data Center, the Office of the Superintendent of Public

Instruction, the DSHS Research and Data Analysis unit, and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy were in attendance. The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs provided comments but were unable to send someone to attend.

The meeting was intended to build collaborative relationships among the stakeholders regarding the topic of gang and firearm data, to finalize and approve the data inventory that was developed with the input of each stakeholder, and to make recommendations to the Legislature for future data development needs and potential areas for data analysis and research.

Participants provided positive feedback on the meeting, appreciating the value of having a space for researchers across different agencies to come together to discuss a specific and relevant topic. Positive unintended outcomes of the meeting were the high level of engagement from partners in the topic at hand, as well as the discussion of opportunities and ideas for future research collaborations among agencies on other possible research topics.

Process for Developing Recommendations from Consortium

During the meeting, discussion was divided into two sections. One of the identified outcomes for the meeting was a list of recommendations for future analyses. Participants were asked to brainstorm in pairs with the question “*What analyses could be performed that would inform prevention and intervention?*”, and then that discussion was followed with a group report-out and conversation. Initially, the group had intended to prioritize the recommendations based on potential impact of the research, however all recommendations were deemed equally important by the end of the discussion. The recommendations have been included in the following section. Another outcome of the meeting was a list of recommendations for data development opportunities. During that section of the meeting, the group brainstormed as a whole, using the question “*What elements do we need to collect and what agency could collect it?*”

Recommendations for Future Analysis and Reporting

The discussion relating to future analysis and potential reporting of firearm data resulted in a thorough list of questions that could be answered with additional time, data, and resources. These questions are below.

Firearm:

- Can we conduct a longitudinal study of current and prior juvenile firearm offenders for a descriptive analysis of criminal history and recidivism in order to establish accurate baseline data for future research?
- How effective are interventions for juvenile firearm offenders? What is the impact of specific programs on offending after the firearm offense – are they effective at reducing recidivism, particularly since the treatment program may not be specific to a firearm offense?

- How can we incorporate family data to the analyses? Will there be an impact on firearm offending depending on whether the parents have a criminal history? Will the family's socio-economic status have an impact?
- Is there an impact depending on the source of the firearm (e.g. whether it was a parent's firearm or acquired from a gang member or friend)? (NOTE: new data needed – this is not collected now)
- What are the initial recidivism rates for the sub-offenses of firearm crime? Do firearm recidivism rates differ from rates for other types of weapons? For example, is a youth more or less likely to reoffend if they use a firearm vs a knife during the commission of a crime? If rates do not differ, should we spend our research focus here?
- If we had a predictive risk model for firearm offending, could we effectively target prevention efforts and education in order to reduce initial offenses and recidivism?
- How do we report on what firearm-related offenses are filed vs adjudicated?

Gang:

- Can we conduct a longitudinal study of current and prior juvenile gang offenders for a descriptive analysis of criminal history and recidivism in order to establish accurate baseline data for future research?
- How effective are interventions for juvenile gang members? What is the impact of specific programs on offending– are they effective at reducing recidivism?
- Are youth more or less likely to reoffend if their crime is considered gang-related? Why or why not?
- If a crime is considered “gang affiliated”, does that predict anything?

Gang and Firearm:

- Are early interventions, such as increased family and child services, protective factors for later offending (e.g. nurse family partnership, community health workers)? What is the impact of a family's participation in early programs on future offending?
- How many firearm or gang-related offenses occur on school grounds or are school-involved incidents (related to bullying or school discipline)?
- Are gang involved juvenile offenders more or less likely than non-gang offenders to use a firearm in the commission of a crime?

There is a large possible scope of research in the areas of juvenile firearm offenses and gang-related incidents. Future research activities will benefit from a discussion about what is necessary to understand in order to prevent and intervene in future offenses. Once targeted research questions are identified, then discussions can occur about the data elements needed to conduct quality research. In some cases, the data exists but has not been linked, but in others it would need to begin a collection process, which would necessarily delay the ability to address the specific research question. There is a

definite need, however, for the research community to establish clear and consistent definitions for firearm offenses and gang membership, so measurements and reports address the same elements, no matter where in the state the research occurs.

Along those lines, research often focuses on quantitative measurements, using statistical analysis of concrete administrative data already collected, in order to complete specific projects. The proposed research questions, which require extensive development of quantitative data elements, would also benefit from using qualitative research methods that would provide additional information to improve understanding of the issues. Qualitative research methods include focus groups and structured one to one interviews, which could be conducted with juvenile firearm offenders and gang members, community members in areas with high firearm or gang-related crime, or a variety of key stakeholders already working in the area of gang intervention. The data collected using those methods will expand on the quantitative data elements available to present a fuller picture of why firearm offenses and gang involvement may occur and where there are opportunities for prevention or intervention. Sometimes, rather than just reviewing data, there is benefit in simply asking the questions of those who are involved. The additional benefit of qualitative projects is the opportunity for an increased level of community engagement and ownership of the issue, leading to greater impact of the outcome. However, qualitative research is often complex and time-intensive, which reduces the opportunity for quick results.

Recommendations for Data Development

The Consortium spent time developing a list of desired data elements that would support further research into this area of juvenile gang and firearm offending. Elements are listed below:

1. Improved data on juvenile gang involvement – including a standard definition for “gang” that has been operationalized and is measurable
2. Data on the source of firearm (where the firearm offender got the weapon) and a descriptor of whether it was legally or illegally obtained
3. Standardized risk and needs assessment that addresses risk for gang involvement and firearm offending, as well as data relating to intervention points
4. Data relating to potential consequences for gang involvement or firearm offending
5. Improved school discipline and attendance data, so it can be linked to offending patterns
6. Identifiable arrest data, so that arrests can be linked to court involvement and described
7. Data regarding police contacts not ending in arrest
8. Information on the make and model of firearms used/in the possession of juveniles
9. Ability within court data to identify all offenses that involved a firearm

10. Data regarding victims of non-fatal injuries, in order to broaden the scope of potential research
11. Catalog of school-based violence prevention initiatives that are operating and the outcomes they are attempting to achieve
12. Descriptive community risk factors that can be points of intervention
13. Identifiable Youth Risk Behavior Study data to broaden the ability to address risky behavior that may result in gang involvement or firearm offenses
14. Implementation of a universal identifier linked to a person's fingerprint

Overarching, strong recommendations included the following broader items intended to improve the state's research and reporting capacity in this area, and in other areas as well.

- Establishing a unique identifier for individuals that can be linked across agency databases
- Establishing a large centralized data warehouse, to reduce duplication of data and ensure that data is secured
- Establishing a standard agreement for data sharing among state agencies, which reduces the need for ad hoc, project based agreements and smooths the process of research collaboration
- Conducting coordinated analysis of data, in order to reduce duplicative studies and increase the ability for new research opportunities to occur
- Creating standard data definitions to be used statewide which support coordinated analyses and research.

While all of the above recommendations will support a large improvement in the state's research capacity, there was a specific recommendation for continuing this Consortium and tasking them with ongoing reporting requirements in order to continue to support statewide efforts to reduce juvenile firearm offenses and gang-related offenses.

Current Programs

As further attention is paid to the short and long-term consequences of juvenile gang and firearm offenses, programs aiming to mitigate their impact have appeared across the country. While evaluation of these programs is still needed in many cases, Operation Ceasefire, Project Safe Neighborhoods and Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T) are a few programs that have shown strong evidence of success^{23, 24, 25}. Efforts to enhance the data driven approach to solutions were reinforced in 2016 when Governor Inslee signed a statewide public health initiative to prevent and

reduce gun-related fatalities ²⁶. Additionally, Seattle became the first city to publicly fund basic research on gun safety in 2013 ²⁷.

Because there are a limited number of gang intervention programs and because firearm research funding has been limited, there are few evidence based interventions available, despite the fact that there are likely to be potential programs and services that focus in this area. Conducting formal program evaluations for existing gang intervention efforts across the state and in local communities, using community-based participatory research methods, may improve the options available to communities in Washington who wish to focus prevention or intervention efforts on the topic.

Conclusion

This report examined juvenile gang and firearm offenders in the 2016 calendar year and identified the multitude of risks and needs they face throughout their lifetime. There is a great deal of information still to be known about this population. This report represents an initial effort to better define and understand these populations, but further analyses must be carried out to understand additional factors associated with these offenses and the interventions and programs that can be enacted to prevent them.

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Appendix A:

Consortium Meeting Agenda

Firearm Data Consortium Meeting

Wednesday November 8, 2017

1:00 – 4:00 PM

Mt St. Helens Conference Room, OB-2, Olympia

Attending: Andrew Peterson (AOC), Doug Allison (CA), Duc Luu (CFC), Kevin Cummings (DEL), Paige Harrison (DOC), Therese Hansen (DOC), Therese Hansen (DOH), Stephanie Cross (ERDC), Sarah Veele (JR), Jennifer Zipoy (JR), Dylan Miksicek (JR), Susan Canaga (OSPI), Ashley Colburn (OSPI), Jim Mayfield (RDA), Joan Smith (WASPC), Dani Fumia (WSIPP), Michael Hirsch (WSIPP)

Meeting Objectives:

- Building collaborative relationships in response to SSB 5883
- Finalize and approve gang and firearm data inventory
- Make recommendations for future data development and analysis

Time Facilitator	Topic	Notes and Comments
1:00 PM Sarah Veele	INTRODUCTIONS	
1:30 PM Sarah Veele	SUMMARY OF PROJECT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSB 5883 language • Description of Existing Analysis by AOC, ERDC and RDA 	
1:45 PM Dylan Miksicek	REVIEW OF DATA INVENTORY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Handout • Review Your Responses • Approve Inventory (sign-off) 	
2:15 PM Jennifer Zipoy	FUTURE ANALYSES <i>What analyses could be performed that would inform prevention and intervention?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm in Pairs • Report Out 	
3:00 PM Jennifer Zipoy	DATA DEVELOPMENT NEEDS <i>What elements do we need to collect and what agency could collect it?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Discussion 	
3:15 PM Sarah Veele	REVIEW AND NEXT STEPS	
4:00 PM	ADJOURN	

Appendix B

Data Inventory Produced By the Consortium

Type of Information:	AOC	CA	CFC	DEL	DOC	DOH	ERDC
Identifying:							
Name	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
DOB	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
County of Residence	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
SSN	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Agency Specific Unique ID	Yes (JUVIS, WSCCR)	Yes (FamLink Id)	Yes (JUVIS)	No	Yes (DOCNUM)	No	Yes (P20ID)
Demographic:							
Race/Ethnicity	Yes (Person Level)	Yes (Person Level)	Yes (Person Level)	No	Yes (Person Level)	Yes (De-identified)	Yes (Person Level)
Sex	Yes (Person Level)	Yes (Person Level)	Yes (Person Level)	No	Yes (Person Level)	Yes (De-identified)	Yes (Person Level)
Sexual Orientation	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Gender Identity	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Gang Affiliation	No	No	No	No	Yes (Person Level)	Yes (De-identified)	No
Involvement with Justice System:							
History of Arrests	No	No	No	No	No	Yes (De-identified)	No
Date of Arrests	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
History of Adjudication	Yes (Person Level)	No	Yes (Person Level)	No	Yes (Person Level)	No	No
Date of Adjudication	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Declination hearing	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Adult Sentence	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Gang Offense	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Firearm Offense	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Offense Class	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Offense Severity	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Diversion	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Deferred	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Detention Stay	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Date of Detention Stay	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Commitment to the State	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Date of State Commitment	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Gang Affiliation Details:							
Name of Gang	No	No	No	No	Yes (Person Level)	No	No
Dates of Affiliation	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Confirmation of Affiliation	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Source of Information	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Criminogenic and Protective Factors:							
Children's Administration Involvement	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Utilization of State Resources	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Treatment Utilization (Substance abuse, Mental Health)	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Homelessness/Housing Instability	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
School Discipline (Suspensions, Expulsions)	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
School Success (Enrollment, Grades, Attendance)	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Employment	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Positive Peer/Role Model	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Participation in Pro-Social Activities	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Gang Member in the Home	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Family Member Incarcerated	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Victim Characteristics:							
Name	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
DOB	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
SSN	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Type of Information:	AOC	CA	CFC	DEL	DOC	DOH	ERDC
County of Residence	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Agency Specific Unique ID	No	No	No	No	Yes	Last 4 digits of Death Certificate	No
Race/Ethnicity	No	No	No	No	No	Yes (De-identified)	No
Sex	No	No	No	No	No	Yes (De-identified)	No
Sexual Orientation	No	No	No	No	No	Yes (De-identified)	No
Gender Identity	No	No	No	No	No	Yes (De-identified)	No
Gang Affiliation	No	No	No	No	No	Yes (De-identified)	No
Other Victim Information:							
ER Visit Related to Offense	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Hospitalization for Offense	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Mortality	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Prior firearm related hospitalization	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Prior Arrest	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Gang Related	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Firearm Related	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Date of Prior Arrest	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Prior Adjudication	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Date of Prior Adjudication	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Offense Characteristics:							
Date of Offense	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Day of Week	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Time of Day	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Victim/Offender Relationship	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Weapon Present	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Location	Yes (County)	No	Yes (County)	No	No	Yes (County)	No
Characteristics of Firearms Used by Juvenile Offenders:							
General Form Type (e.g. long gun / hand gun)	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Detailed Description of Firearm	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Description Details	-	-	-	-	-	Make, Model, Caliber, Registered, Relationship to Gun Owner, Method of Acquisition	-
Long Term/distal Outcomes of Offender:							
Emergency Room Visit	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Mortality	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Utilization of State Services	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Educational Attainment	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Employment	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Treatment Offered	Yes	Yes (Paid Services Only)	No	No	No	No	No
Re-Arrest	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Date of Re-Arrest	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Firearm Victimization	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Community Characteristics:							
Percent of community below poverty	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Economic Change over time	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Police to resident ratio	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Average educational attainment	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Employment Rates	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Age Distribution	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Type of Information:	AOC	CA	CFC	DEL	DOC	DOH	ERDC
Additional Information:	Also collect data on: Case IDs, Data on Referrals, PACT Assessment, Criminogenic and protective factors on probationers given full PACT risk assessment, Childrens Administration involvement in the form of dependency cases.	Also collect data on: Registered Sex Offender Information, In-patient hospitalization of CA Children and may have data on Criminogenic and protective factors and long term outcomes for paid services.	-	DEL may have protective program participation data, including participation in preschool, subsidized childcare, and early intervention services. These are all programs in which young children participate, so participation could be viewed in a longitudinal examination as early life protective factors.	Characteristics of Adjudication are only for CURRENT Sentences, Treatment utilization is only for DOC services, Victim Information does not include all victims (only for those who require victim notification), Offense specific information is not available in aggregate.	All victim information is related to mortality/death, Firearm characteristics obtained through Violent Death Reporting System,	
Key Stakeholders:	Carl McCurley, Wei Wang	Doug Allison	State Legislature	-	Classification Administrator, Investigative Operations Chief, Records Administrator, RDA Director	-	Thea Mounts and Stephanie Cross - Statistical Analysis Center
Information Sharing:	Must Contact Data Dissemination Administrator	Shares with RDA. Requires a new data sharing agreement for other entities	CFC shares only aggregate level data and may suppress identifiable figures. Requires data sharing agreement	-	Contact George Xu: gcxu@doc1.wa.gov	De-identified data dissemination practices are being developed by DOH. Utilize a secure file transfer system currently	Office of Financial Management is the data warehouse for educational data in the state. Only De-identified data can be obtained
Data Recommendations:	-	-	-		-	-	DOC - Re-arrest as Adult
Individual Submitting Inventory:	Andrew Peterson (Andrew.Peterson@courts.wa.gov)	Tammy Cordova (CordoTK@dshs.wa.gov)	Duc Luu (duc.luu@cfc.wa.gov)	Kevin Cummings (kevin.cummings@del.wa.gov)	Paige Harrison (pmharrison@DOC1.WA.GOV)	Therese Hanson (therese.hansen@doh.wa.gov)	Stephanie Cross (stephanie.cross@ofm.wa.gov)

Type of Information:	JR	OSPI	RDA	WASPC	WSIPP	# Yes
Identifying:						
Name	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	9
DOB	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	9
County of Residence	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	6
SSN	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	6
Agency Specific Unique ID	Yes (JR#, JUVIS)	Yes (SSID)	Yes (DSHS ID)	No	Yes (WSIPID)	9
Demographic:						
Race/Ethnicity	Yes	Yes (Person Level)	Yes	Yes (De-identified)	Yes (Person Level)	11
Sex	Yes	Yes (Person Level)	Yes	Yes (De-identified)	Yes (Person Level)	11
Sexual Orientation	Yes	No	No	No	No	1
Gender Identity	Yes	No	No	No	No	1
Gang Affiliation	Yes	No	No	No	No	3
Involvement with Justice System:						
History of Arrests	No	No	Yes	No	Yes (Person Level)	3
Date of Arrests	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	3
History of Adjudication	No	No	Yes	No	Yes (Person Level)	5
Date of Adjudication	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	5
Declination hearing	No	No	No	No	Yes	2
Adult Sentence	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	5
Gang Offense	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	2
Firearm Offense	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	5
Offense Class	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	6
Offense Severity	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	6
Diversion	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	3
Deferred	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	3
Detention Stay	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	6
Date of Detention Stay	No	No	No	No	No	3
Commitment to the State	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	6
Date of State Commitment	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	5
Gang Affiliation Details:						
Name of Gang	Yes	No	No	No	No	2
Dates of Affiliation	No	No	No	No	No	0
Confirmation of Affiliation	No	No	No	No	No	1
Source of Information	No	No	No	No	No	0
Criminogenic and Protective Factors:						
Children's Administration Involvement	No	No	Yes	No	No	3
Utilization of State Resources	No	No	Yes	No	No	2
Treatment Utilization (Substance abuse, Mental Health)	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	3
Homelessness/Housing Instability	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	3
School Discipline (Suspensions, Expulsions)	No	Yes	No	No	No	3
School Success (Enrollment, Grades, Attendance)	No	Yes	No	No	No	3
Employment	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	3
Positive Peer/Role Model	No	No	No	No	No	0
Participation in Pro-Social Activities	No	No	No	No	No	1
Gang Member in the Home	No	No	No	No	No	0
Family Member Incarcerated	Yes	No	No	No	No	2
Victim Characteristics:						
Name	No	No	No	No	No	1
DOB	No	No	No	No	No	2
SSN	No	No	No	No	No	0

Type of Information:	JR	OSPI	RDA	WASPC	WSIPP	# Yes
County of Residence	No	No	No	No	No	2
Agency Specific Unique ID	No	No	No	No	No	2
Race/Ethnicity	No	No	No	Yes (De-identified)	No	2
Sex	No	No	No	Yes (De-identified)	No	2
Sexual Orientation	No	No	No	No	No	1
Gender Identity	No	No	No	No	No	1
Gang Affiliation	No	No	No	No	No	1
Other Victim Information:						
ER Visit Related to Offense	No	No	No	No	No	1
Hospitalization for Offense	No	No	No	No	No	1
Mortality	No	No	No	No	No	1
Prior firearm related hospitalization	No	No	No	No	No	0
Prior Arrest	No	No	No	No	No	1
Gang Related	No	No	No	No	No	1
Firearm Related	No	No	No	No	No	1
Date of Prior Arrest	No	No	No	No	No	0
Prior Adjudication	No	No	No	No	No	1
Date of Prior Adjudication	No	No	No	No	No	0
Offense Characteristics:						
Date of Offense	Yes	Yes (If at School)	Yes	Yes	Yes	9
Day of Week	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	5
Time of Day	No	No	No	Yes	Yes (only for WSP data)	3
Victim/Offender Relationship	No	No	No	Yes	No	2
Weapon Present	No	Yes (If at School)	No	Yes	Yes	5
Location	No	Yes (School)	Yes (County)	Yes (County)	No	6
Characteristics of Firearms Used by Juvenile Offenders:						
General Form Type (e.g. long gun / hand gun)	No	No	No	Yes	No	2
Detailed Description of Firearm	No	No	No	No	No	1
Description Details	-	-	-	-	-	
Long Term/distal Outcomes of Offender:						
Emergency Room Visit	No	No	Yes	No	No	1
Mortality	No	No	Yes	No	No	1
Utilization of State Services	No	No	Yes	No	No	1
Educational Attainment	No	Yes (Only K - 12)	No	No	No	2
Employment	No	No	Yes	No	No	2
Treatment Offered	No	No	Yes	No	No	3
Re-Arrest	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	2
Date of Re-Arrest	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	2
Firearm Victimization	No	No	No	No	No	0
Community Characteristics:						
Percent of community below poverty	No	Yes	No	No	No	1
Economic Change over time	No	No	No	No	No	0
Police to resident ratio	No	No	No	No	Yes (County Level)	1
Average educational attainment	No	Yes	No	No	No	1
Employment Rates	No	Yes	No	No	No	1
Age Distribution	No	No	No	No	No	0

Type of Information:	JR	OSPI	RDA	WASPC	WSIPP	# Yes
Additional Information:	Criminal history only collected for JR youth.	Also have data on: Preferred and Legal Name, Unaccompanied Youth Status, Assessment Results, Program Enrollment	All information is person level data. Other data may be included at the Integrated Client's Database (ICDB) and RDA may have data on economic change and police to resident ratios. Availability of some data depends on Medicaid eligibility. Additional data at: https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/research-and-data-analysis/community-risk-profiles		WSIPP does not collect data, but obtains data from AOC, DOC and WSP. WSIPP maintains a state criminal justice database that integrates AOC, DOC and JRA data. SSN information only for arrest and incarceration data, but Not charge and conviction data. Collects data on County/Court of Adjudication.	
Key Stakeholders:	Sarah Veele, Pam Sacks	Educational Service Districts, School Districts, Public	-	Incident and Arrest data collected according to FBI UCR guidelines.	-	
Information Sharing:	Receptive to data sharing based on the need of the agency. Work with contracts department to develop a MOU or DSA	OSPI has a robust Data Sharing Agreement which is outlined here: http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/DataSharing/DataSharing.aspx	Can easily share aggregate data. De-identified or identified data requires a DSA, and possibly IRB approval	Aggregate crime statistics are available based on parameters within a law enforcement incident or reportable arrest	Make a request to WSIPP. You will be directed to AOC and Doc for approval and complete a DSA or IRB form. WSIPP can share criminal justice database information with state agencies	
Data Recommendations:	Country of Origin					
Individual Submitting Inventory:	Sarah Veele (veelesl@dshs.wa.gov)	Ashley Colburn (Ashley.Colburn@k12.wa.us)	Jim Mayfield (mayfijw@dshs.wa.gov)	Joan Smith (jsmith@waspc.org)	Dani Fumia (dani.fumia@wsipp.wa.gov), Lijian He lijian.he@wsipp.wa.gov	