

Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI)

Targeting the most violent offenders in Maryland

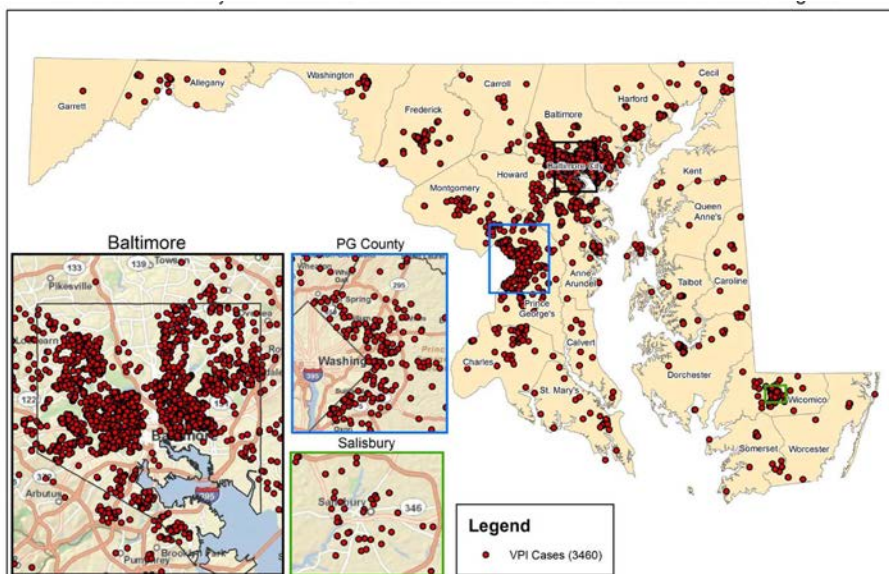
At the personal direction of Governor O'Malley, in July 2007, Division of Parole and Probation (now Community Supervision) developed the Violence Prevention Initiative, a statewide, divisional commitment to reducing violent crime in Maryland.

Crime statistics show in 2007, nearly 30% of all people arrested in Baltimore were under DPSCS supervision. Nearly 30% of the individuals arrested for first degree murder were under the supervision of DPSCS. Based on a review of murder and shooting suspects and victim histories, Community Supervision created an easy-to-administer, common-sense risk assessment tool to identify the most dangerous supervisees. Using specific screening criteria, Community Supervision identified approximately 2,300 offenders under supervision who have a high propensity for committing future violent crimes, and developed enhanced supervision and containment models to manage these high-risk offenders. Currently, there are over 2,100 offenders in VPI throughout the state.

In March 2009, Community Supervision developed a second level of supervision VP2, to begin to transition the offender toward supervision outside of the violence prevention initiative.

Community Supervision now makes the identities of their high-risk offenders available to local law enforcement so that police officers on the street can help them closely monitor the activities of these potentially dangerous individuals and, if necessary, take steps to remove them from the streets in a timely manner.

Offenders in the Maryland Community Supervision Violence Prevention Initiative



Considered Elements for VPI:

- Date of birth
- Age (current age, intake age, and age at first arrest)
- Sex
- Education level
- Employment and marital status
- Zip Code (where offender resides)
- Number of juvenile and adult arrests
- Total sentences imposed
- Drug and psychiatric treatment
- Current charge is for assault or gun-related crimes
- Parole includes mandatory supervision release or probation

Considered Factors Overriding into VPI:

- The offender was previously supervised by the DJS VPI unit
- High-ranking gang status
- Considers whether the offender was a shooting victim in the last 3 years
- Considers any prior assaults on staff, assaults on inmates, & Administrative Segregation commitments
- Considers recommendations by the Intelligence Center, police departments, state's attorney offices, Corrections, Community Supervision, and the Parole Commission

Any offender placed on VPI is required to have weekly face-to-face meetings with Community Supervision agents and Department policy requires the immediate request of a VOP warrant for any re-arrest.

Impacting Public Safety Across Maryland

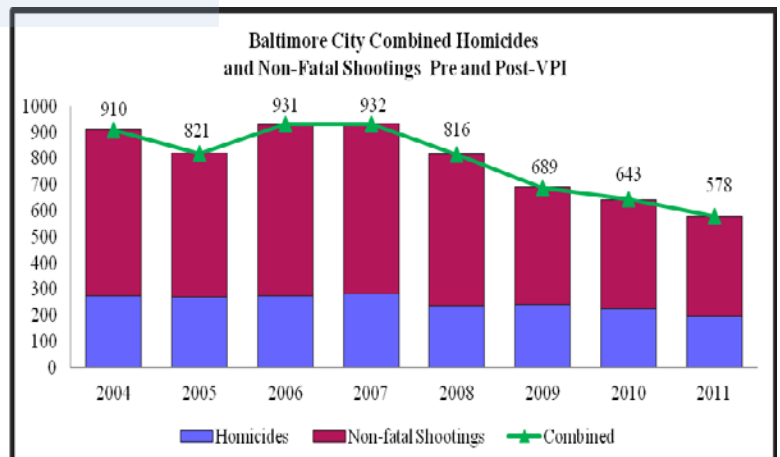
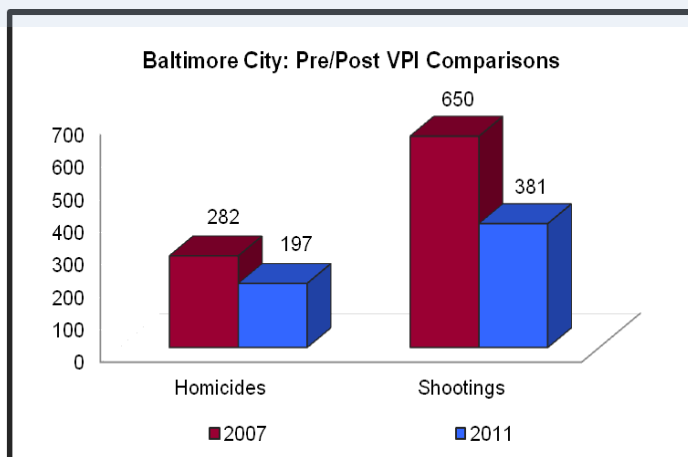
After the inception of the Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI) in July 2007, Community Supervision began assigning full-time agents to Intelligence Units across the State. The first Community Supervision agent was assigned to the Watch Center in Baltimore City. Since 2007, agents have been assigned to the Baltimore County Police Department and Prince George's County Police Department to complement the intelligence role Community Supervision plays in creating and maintaining a safer Maryland. In addition, Community Supervision has added a part-time agent assigned to the Watch Center in Salisbury. This is the intelligence arm of the VPI strategy; to ensure that information on violent incidents involving Community Supervision offenders is immediately available to VPI (and other) agents, whose response to these incidents is immediate. These individuals, embedded on a full-time basis in strategic units of the respective police departments, constitute the primary component of the Intelligence Unit. This unit was developed to strengthen the agency's presence in the community, and its role in the constant effort to make our communities safer. This promotes increased collaboration among local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

Accountability

Community Supervision recognizes the importance of monitoring the effectiveness of VPI. As such, hand-selected VPI agents are responsible for meeting the standards of VPI supervision as set forth by Community Supervision. Through PriorityStat, the Department is able to identify and react to specific issues in a timely fashion. Agents, who are not performing as expected, are removed from VPI caseloads. In an effort to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of VPI, Community Supervision is continuing to evaluate the risk assessment tool and screening criteria. As necessary, the Department will make changes to ensure that the most violent offenders under community supervision are supervised in an effective containment model with strict compliance standards.

“We also overhauled, at long last, Community Supervision and the way that they had in the past of figuring out who should be at the highest level of supervision. We are now in a much better position and have already zeroed in on the most violent predators with far more intensive supervision.”

—Governor Martin O'Malley



Since VPI was established in 2007, Baltimore City has seen a 30% decline in homicides and a 41% decline in non-fatal shootings. This significant reduction in homicides and shootings suggests that VPI, which emphasizes collaborative efforts between police officers and Community Supervision agents, has improved public safety in Maryland.