

Is Problem Solving Effective?

CPD's Problem Solving Guide begins with the following statement: "We know that problem solving is one of the most **effective** crime reduction strategies . . .", but how do we know?

There are many research studies that offer evidence in favor of problem solving, including Hinkle et al.'s (2020) publication "Problem-oriented policing for reducing crime and disorder: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis".

Thirty-four POP studies were assessed in this review. In their plain language summary, the authors found ". . . POP is associated with a statistically significant overall reduction in crime and disorder of 34%" (2).

The authors also asserted: "[f]indings from this review support the notion that proactive policing strategies that identify specific problems, conduct analyses to determine underlying causes, and develop and deliver tailor-made responses, are more effective in reducing crime and disorder than standard, reactive methods of policing. Moreover, in place-based interventions, diffusion of benefits are more likely than displacing crime to nearby areas" (3).

In Cincinnati, there have been many POP successes. A few are highlighted below:

- A problem-solving effort aimed at youth violence and disorder near Government Square has been underway since 2024. Although efforts continue, analysts have noted declines in youth involved calls for service (~27% fewer) and declines in youth involved crime (~50% fewer) near Government Square.
 - This project is a 2025 Herman Goldstein Award *Finalist* for International Excellence in Problem-Oriented-Policing
- In 2016, Cincinnati launched the PIVOT strategy, focused on shooting victimization. Shootings reduced from between twelve and ninety-two percent in the first five project sites. Fifty fewer gunshot victims were recorded post-PIVOT, across all five sites (see Hammer, 2020).
 - This project won the 2017 Herman Goldstein Award for International Excellence in Problem-Oriented-Policing
- In 2007, CPD initiated the CIRV program, a collaborative problem-solving effort aimed at dramatically reducing group and gang involved gun violence and homicides, which reduced by 38% in the first year.
 - This project was awarded the International Association of Chiefs of Police Webber Seavey Award for quality in Law Enforcement

- In 2006, CPD worked on a problem-solving strategy aimed at reducing traffic crash injuries by identifying hotspot crash locations, focusing on “persistent causative factors”, and tailoring specific responses to targeted locations. Fatal crashes were reduced 47% pre/post intervention and “the City of Cincinnati averaged 288 vehicle crashes per month in the four years preceding the implementation of CARS, compared to 220 vehicle crashes per month in the four years after the implementation of CARS” (Corsaro, Gerard, Engel, & Eck, 2012).
 - This project was published in the Journal of Criminal Justice in 2012