

Intervening in Violent Retaliatory Disputes

Program Abstract for Smart Policing Initiative (BJA-2011-2944)

The Rochester Police Department (RPD) proposes a demonstration project in the City of Rochester, NY on the topic of violent dispute intervention. Previous national and local research show that disputes account for most incidents of firearm violence. Of these disputes, those of an ongoing violent retaliatory nature are particularly ripe for crime prevention strategies. Recent programs involving civilian “violence interrupters” to intervene in retaliatory disputes have shown promise, yet this approach has not been adopted by police, despite their strengths in relevant skills for dispute intervention. Additionally, while a variety of “evidence-based” tactics are relevant to this problem, (particularly offender-based “pulling levers” and “place-based” tactics), we are unaware of any attempts to tie these approaches into a police-based violent retaliatory dispute intervention strategy. This project proposes to 1.) improve understanding on the scope and nature of violent retaliatory disputes, 2.) to formalize a dispute risk assessment method for police to identify and prioritize those at high-risk for retaliation, and 3.) To create, test, evaluate, and document a violent dispute intervention strategy that can be extensible to other departments. This project is innovative because it articulates a data-driven strategy which employs proven “evidence-based” approaches in a novel way, focusing on the problem of violent retaliatory disputes.

The applicant and research partner (the Center for Public Safety Initiatives (CPSI) in the Criminal Justice Department of the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)), have a long history of successful projects, and have a wealth of experience regarding coordinated data-driven problem analysis. The research partner will conduct an evaluation of the strategy as well as provide deliverables for the project. In order to implement this project, the applicant requests \$300,000, and anticipates a complete project duration of two years.