

PUBLIC SAFETY INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER



Governor Bill Lee

PSI CO-SPONSORS UPCOMING FORUM ON JOBS FOR EX-OFFENDERS

Governor Bill Lee, Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland, Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris and Commissioner Tony Parker of the Tennessee Department of Correction will be among those participating in a forum Tuesday, June 11, designed to connect Memphis area businesses with sources of skilled, qualified employees who also happen to be ex-offenders.

The forum will be held from 8:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. (with a continental breakfast from 8–8:30 a.m.) at the University Center Ballroom on the main campus of the University of Memphis, with parking in the Zach Curlin Drive parking garage. Both registration and parking are free.

To register, visit memphis.edu/psi/register by June 6.

The forum is co-sponsored by the Public Safety Institute (PSI), Memphis Shelby Crime Commission, Greater Memphis Chamber and Tennessee Department of Correction.

Groups making presentations will include:

- HopeWorks/Hope to Hire
- Economic Opportunities (EcOp)
- Shelby County Office of Reentry
- Manhood University
- LIFeline to Success
- Tennessee Department of Correction
- Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)



Mayor Jim Strickland



PSI CONDUCTS ASSESSMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY INITIATIVE

The Public Safety Institute (PSI) has conducted and issued an interim assessment of the Neighborhood Safety Initiative (NSI), that is part of the local Operation: Safe Community plan to reduce crime.

In consultation with the Memphis Police Department (MPD), the NSI was launched in the Old Allen and Tillman MPD precincts in 2017. The Old Allen precinct encompasses the Raleigh and Frayser areas of Memphis. The Tillman precinct is very diverse and includes the University of Memphis area, HighPoint Terrace, Binghampton, Highland Heights and Berclair.

The NSI is designed to increase citizen engagement and impact by building on and strengthening already existing partnerships among neighborhood groups, law enforcement and other government agencies. In particular, the NSI focuses on expanding the number and geographic scope of neighborhood watch programs created and maintained by the MPD and supporting the existing system of police joint agencies (PJAs), which provide an avenue for citizens to bring crime and blight concerns to the attention of public officials.

The interim assessment looks at different components of the NSI, the processes involved and some of the outcomes thus far. It contains both conclusions and recommendations going forward.

Recommendations include:

- A ramped up, grassroots effort to recruit new neighborhood watch leaders and connect them to the MPD for proper training, with the goal of significantly increasing both the number and geographic scope of organized watch groups;
- A better system of accountability to ensure public agencies participating in the PJA process are prepared consistently to discuss items on the meeting agendas, coupled with a sense of urgency to address priority items;
- Increased community participation in PJA meetings, especially by neighborhood watch leaders and business owners.

The entire assessment may be viewed on the PSI's website at memphis.edu/psi/research.

We give a special thanks to Max Helms, the PSI lead research assistant, who compiled various sources of data together into a coherent report; Dr. Angela Madden, PSI research associate professor, who oversaw the research effort; Brona Pinnolis, vice president for strategic implementation for the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission, who collected most of the data; and Steve Shular, Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland's special assistant for neighborhood concerns, who chairs an NSI working group. We thank the leadership of the MPD in the Old Allen and Tillman precincts, the leadership of the PJAs and other engaged, committed citizens in these precincts.



District Attorney Amy Weirich

ASSESSMENT ISSUED ON GANG INJUNCTIONS AND SAFETY ZONES IN MEMPHIS

One tool being used by local law enforcement and District Attorney Amy Weirich to reduce gang violence is court-issued injunctions requiring specified members of particular gangs to abide by certain conditions in geographic areas called “safety zones.” Six injunctions have been issued thus far in Memphis.

An interim assessment designed to look at the effectiveness of this tool has been conducted and issued by the PSI. The assessment seeks to address three research questions:

- Do the injunctions reduce the number of violent offenses in the safety zones?
- Do gang injunctions reduce arrests of individuals subject to the injunctions?
- Do police officers working in precincts with safety zones know about the injunctions and prohibited behavior?

From the assessment, it appears the gang injunctions have impacted the number of violent offenses within the zones. The number of violent crimes decreased in four of the six zones during the period reviewed and remained essentially the same in the other two zones.

Through June 2018, 47 enjoined individuals were arrested for 67 injunction violations, with peaks occurring immediately after the issuance of injunctions, then tapering off. However, this post-injunction look at arrests cannot determine whether the injunctions reduced arrests for criminal activity. A full evaluation is planned to more thoroughly address this research issue.

Finally, the assessment shows a lack of knowledge among many police officers in precincts with safety zone injunctions about the existence of the safety zones, the conditions of the injunctions and the specific gangs and gang members covered by the injunctions. This lack of awareness by many officers limits effective enforcement of the injunctions. The assessment recommends additional officer training on gang injunctions and safety zones, especially in those precincts in which injunctions have been issued.

Dr. Angela Madden, PSI research associate professor, conducted the research on the assessment. Dr. James McCutcheon of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice assisted in the mapping. To review the assessment in its entirety, go to memphis.edu/psi/research.



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